

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!

May 10, 2026

*Just love the one in front of you. Take in the orphan, take in the widow.
Just love the one in front of you.*

Heidi Baker

PRELUDE

*Westminster Abbey
Poème mystique*

A. Gant
R. Purvis

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASSING OF THE PEACE

INTROIT

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Christ has risen.

People: Stones of fear are rolled away.

Leader: Christ is risen.

People: Those who were pushed aside are welcomed in.

Leader: Christ is risen.

People: Life will never be the same again.

***HYMN**

My Shepherd Is the Living God

black #247

MESSAGE FOR ALL

At the conclusion of the message, 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

We get caught up in the trials and tribulations of life, Holy One, we often forget that we are never alone or left to our own devices. We try to face the challenges around us on our own, as if we are abandoned orphans. Forgive us when we insist on taking over on our own.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Holy One, may you remind us that you stand ready to be our advocate, our adoptive parent who counsels, helps, and leads us, always. 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

John 14:15-21

¹⁵ “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. ¹⁷ This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

¹⁸ “I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. ¹⁹ In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. ²⁰ On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. ²¹ They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me, and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

SERMON

NO LONGER ORPHANS

*HYMN

Holy Spirit, Truth Divine

black # 63

OFFERING

Invitation

Offertory

Jesus Loves Me

***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** *For the Healing of the Nations* black # 576

***BENEDICTION**

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE** *Threefold Amen*

POSTLUDE *Trumpet Tune on Westminster Abbey* L. Schipull

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

The Deacons are asking you to refrain from clapping. If moved by the postlude or worship, please shout out "AMEN!" We are implementing this to move away from worship being a performance, to sharing a sentiment of having been filled by worship/music.

**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.*

In our Service Today

Preacher:	Rev. Lori J. Souder
Scripture Reader:	
Organist:	Larry Schipull
Choir Director:	Ben Coakley
Deacon:	Rachel Alldis



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:

Barbara Blank, on Hospice at Reeds Landing
Martha Guild's mother, June
Eileen Halkyard
Elisa's young friend Elija, addiction recovery
Eunice Howes
Elisa Morrison's step-mother Sandy, and
brother Carl, with heart issues
Leila Mulder, attending boarding school
Mary Nelsons father, Dave, with cancer
Fay Paquette
Nikki Wolf, Linda's granddaughter
Those struggling with addiction,
with cancer, and with chronic disease



Situational:

Cynthia Baker
Dennis Banks, friend of Karen and
Estelle Anderson, with cancer
Bob Cocker, Rob Cocker's dad, after a fall
Bob Farman and family on the passing of his
sister, Bonnie
Robin Glossner, undergoing chemo
Kate and John Hoffman's daughter Sarah,
following surgery
John Hoffman's parents, Jean and John

**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**

THE MINISTRY AT CENTER CHURCH

Ministers: All Church Members
Senior Minister: Rev. Lori J. Souder

Christian Education Program

Children: Vicki Scherer, Coordinator, Emily Mulder & Julia Nogales, Teachers
Youth Coordinator: Kenneth Mulder
Nursery Caregiver: Annabelle Burke

Music

Organist: Larry Schipull
Choir Director: Ben Coakley
Associate in Music: Cynthia Morrell
Office Administrator: Cynthia Jubinville
Sexton: Robert Farman

This Week at Center Church

Monday **Outreach Team 7pm**
Wednesday **Breakfast Conversation 8am Trustees 7pm**
Thursday **Bible Study 11am AA 1:30pm**
Sunday **Worship 10am Deacons following service**
 Cathedral in the Night 4:30pm



Center Church Announcements

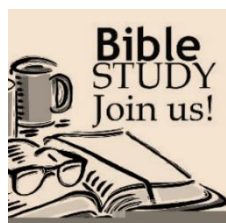
Please sign up to read Scripture during Sunday worship. There is a sign-up sheet on the table in the Bock Crossway. Also, please consider being a greeter as folks come into the Sanctuary – signup sheet also in the Crossway.

Breakfast and Conversation: May 13 8-9am in Fellowship Hall

Topic: Birthright Citizenship: What is the Biblical meaning of birthright? U.S. Faith Communities Unite In Support of Birthright Citizenship –and CNN’s takeaway of the Supreme Court’s understanding.

Please pick up the reading for the discussion at the Church Street entrance. Donations are welcome for the light breakfast

Let’s Find Out: We know there are friends of Center Church who attend quite frequently. Do you wish to know more about the church? Do you wish to join or be reinstated? What times work best for a meeting? - during the early evenings or after church? Please let Lori know.



Please join us for conversation on another Gospel found in Robert Miller’s edit book, The Complete Gospels. Dr Miller has compiled all the canonical and non-canonical gospels, otherwise known as those gospels sanctioned by The Church and those that were later identified and that never “made the cut” in the 3rd Century. We can see why the Gospel of Mary ruffled some feathers.

Come ruffle some feathers together. We meet from **11-12 noon in the Loomis Village Conference Room** (upstairs). We will meet **May 14 and 21st**. The short reading has not been selected yet, but will be available by May 7th on the table in the Church St entrance, or will dropped off in Loomis mailboxes or sent to you via email.



2026 Annual Meeting

HAMPSHIRE ASSOCIATION
of the Southern New England UCC

June 7, 2026, at 3pm

Plainfield Congregational Church
356 West Main Street Plainfield, MA



You may still make a contribution to our special collection for the Peterson Memorial Scholarship Fund. This fund was established by Rev. Gus Peterson, who served in the capacity of the volunteer Minister of Missions at Center Church from 1990-

2006. The fund's statement of purpose says "The fund exists to assist people who wish to pursue their education to help them reach their fullest potential, but whose financial situation makes it difficult for them to do so." The Peterson Scholarship team selects recipients and distributes the scholarships. Contributions to this fund may also be sent to the church office.

Applications for one of these scholarships are available in the church office. Deadline for submission of the application is May 12th.



On **Pentecost Sunday, May 24**, Center Church will join congregations across the United Church of Christ in receiving the **Strengthen the Church** special mission offering – one of the UCC's four annual offerings dedicated to nurturing new life, new leaders, and new ministries in

our wider church.

Strengthen the Church supports the growth and expansion of emerging ministries, including:

- new church starts
- innovative ministry offerings
- programs for youth and young adults
- leadership development
- creative approaches to renewing existing congregations

80% of your gift stays in the Southern New England Conference, supporting local and regional ministry innovation.

20% supports national UCC ministries, helping the wider church respond boldly to the Spirit's movement.

You may support the **Strengthen the Church offering** anytime between now and May 31, through personal check in the offering plate or mail, or on the Center Church website. Please clearly mark, "Strengthen the Church" in the memo line so we can record and send your contribution to the Conference.



Cathedral in the Night is an outdoor Christian community in downtown Northampton, MA which seeks to create a safe place for all people: the homeless, the housed, the church-less, the church-ed, the student and the resident to explore, question and live out their spiritual beliefs; to gather for a meal and to empower one another to engage in issues of social justice by working to fight the causes of inequality and homelessness. **The Outreach Team is providing meals Sunday on May 17. Coming Soon - sign up sheet for food and people needed to help with this ministry.** Come and help. Come to the worship which starts at 4:30. You will be blessed.



TAG SALE ????



The Church Council and the Trustees have been discussing the viability of the Fall Tag Sale Fundraiser. This project, along with the Holiday Bazaar and the Spring Tea, generated over \$19,000 in 2025 to the church, growing annually. The current discussion wonders if pledges can increase to not only cover normal operating expenses each year for the church, but the loss of this income.

To continue the Fall Tag Sale Fundraiser, we need additional *committed* help to deliver a fundraiser that attracts our community successfully. Traditionally, we draw donations and buyers to a well-oiled project that has grown since humble beginnings in 1996. This project needs more hands and volunteer hours “on the floor”, to happen this fall. We have changes being discussed to control the hours the project takes to complete, but volunteer hours are what is needed.

By the way, the most time-consuming parts of the fair preparation are:
Pricing...Sorting into categories...Cleaning donations

The fair always needs Donations!!! That are sale-able!!! We are always interested in donations that are *oriented to our market*. The time to plan for our early fall fundraiser starts in May.

If you are interested in keeping the Tag Sale Fundraiser, and willing to pledge time to make it happen, we are very accommodating to individual availability. Please contact Corinne Chartrand and Karen Anderson, co-chairs, if you can join in.

Registration for United Church of Christ summer camp at Silver Lake Camp and Retreat Center is open. Silver Lake offers one-week overnight camp sessions from June 21 – July 25 for campers entering 4th through 12th grade. Experience inclusive and nurturing Christian community, opportunities to grow and participate as Christ’s disciples, and a model of sustainable environmental stewardship of God’s world. Center Church has a limited number of \$275 Silver Lake summer camp scholarships for Center Church families. Summer camp information at silverlakeect.org Open House May 17.

Contact the Center Church office for scholarship information.



Summer Camp 2026 registration is OPEN NOW

[View all the sessions and register today!](#)



Summer Camp 2026

Week #

Grades 4-6

Grades 7-9

Grades 10-12

Tiered Pricing: \$940 | \$850 | \$760 *Financial Assistance is available.*

1 JUNE 21-27 	PRaise & Play All Day Deans: Stacy Stevens, Debi Mastroni-Kenyon BRING ON THE MONSTERS Deans: Brittany Romaniello, Rebekah Lyon ARTS ALIVE Deans: Emily McKenna, Tiffany Nakanishi BABY CAMP Ages 0-3 & Adult Wednesday-Saturday Deans: Chelsea Kordiak, Mike Kordiak, Anne Hughes
2 JUNE 28- JULY 4 	FAMILY CAMP 1 All Ages Sunday-Wednesday Deans: Sarah Rodriguez, Chris Miller CIRCLE OF FRIENDS Deans: Camryn Cicarelli, Aran Gillette TBA Program Details to be Announced Soon! ADVENTURE CAMP! Dean: Andrew Wicks
3 JULY 5-11 	FAMILY CAMP 2 All Ages Sunday-Wednesday Deans: Evelyn Cass Adams, Kelsey DeCarlo WATER WORLD Deans: Betty Geiling, Josh Geiling, Maureen Montrose SING PRAISE Deans: Valerie Tutson, Leanna Bonafini, Whendi Cook Braderick
4 JULY 12-18	MUGGLES & WIZARDS Dean: Jennifer Long FUN IN THE SON Deans: Brian Lapis, Cameron Hull, Caitlin Mundy
5 JULY 19-25 	GOD SONG Deans: Victoria Bower, Brianna Gambacini ALL ABOARD! Deans: Brittany Anderson, Kaleb Oakleaf SUMMERTIME S.T.E.A.M. Deans: Vin Urbanowski, Donna Kaiser



Southern New England Conference
United Church of Christ
Changing the World & Saving of souls



ACCREDITED

www.SilverLakeCT.org

[Silver Lake Camp & Retreat Center](#)

A Ministry of the [Southern New England Conference UCC](#)

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My Shepherd Is the Living God

Ps. 23; John 10:11, 27-30

Composite from Thomas Sternhold, 1549, and Isaac Watts, 1719; alt.

C G C G7 C F G F C

1 My shep-herd is the liv - ing God, I there-fore noth-ing need;
 2 When I walk through the shades of death, your pres-ence is my stay;
 3 The sure pro - vi - sions of my God at - tend me all my days;

Am G C F G Am G7 C G C

In pas - tures fair, near pleas - ant streams you set - tle me to feed.
 A word of your sup - port - ing breath drives all my fears a - way.
 O may your house be my a - bode, and all my work be praise.

C F C Dm G C Am Dm Am FM7

You bring my wan-dering spir - it back when I for-sake your ways,
 Your hand, in sight of all my foes, does still my ta - ble spread;
 There would I find a set - tled rest, while oth - ers come and go—

Em C Am Dm Am Em C G7 C

And lead me for your mer - cy's sake in paths of truth and grace.
 My cup with bless-ings o - ver-flows, your oil a - noints my head.
 No more a strang-er or a guest, but like a child at home.

Isaac Watts, London's leading Congregational minister, wrote more than 600 hymns. His paraphrase of Psalm 23 has been altered here by combining a few phrases from Thomas Sternhold, a sixteenth-century English hymnwriter who also wrote metrical psalm texts.

Tune: CONSOLATION C.M.D.
 Southern Harmony, 1835
 Harm. Erik Routley, 1976

Alternate tune: CRIMOND (Each stanza above becomes two stanzas.)

Holy Spirit, Truth Divine

63

Samuel Longfellow, 1864; alt.

1 Ho - ly Spir - it, truth di - vine, dawn up - on this soul of mine.
2 Ho - ly Spir - it, love di - vine, glow with - in this heart of mine.
3 Ho - ly Spir - it, power di - vine, fill and nerve this will of mine.
4 Ho - ly Spir - it, law di - vine, reign with - in this soul of mine.

Voice of God and in - ward light, wake my spir - it from its night.
Kin - dle ev - ery high de - sire, pu - ri - fy me with your fire.
Bold - ly may I al - ways live, brave - ly serve, and glad - ly give.
Be my law, and I shall be firm - ly bound, for - ev - er free.

The musical score consists of two systems. Each system has a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system contains four verses of lyrics. The second system contains the concluding lines of the hymn.

Louis Moreau Gottschalk was the first American musician to be acclaimed at home and abroad as a virtuoso pianist and gifted composer, often incorporating folk and popular tunes into his own concert music. Mercy was arranged from his piano composition, "The Last Hope."

Tune: MERCY 7.7.7.7.
Louis Moreau Gottschalk, 1867
Arr. Edwin Parker, 1888

For the Healing of the Nations

Fred Kaan, 1965

1 For the heal - ing of the na - tions, God, we pray with
 2 Lead us for - ward in - to free - dom; from de - spair your
 3 All that kills a - bun - dant liv - ing, let it from the
 4 You, Cre - a - tor God, have writ - ten your great name on

one ac - cord; for a just and e - qual shar - ing
 world re - lease, that, re - deemed from war and ha - tred,
 earth be banned; pride of sta - tus, race, or school - ing,
 hu - man - kind; for our grow - ing in your like - ness

of the things that earth af - fords; to a life of
 all may come and go in peace. Show us how through
 dog - mas that ob - scure your plan. In our com - mon
 bring the life of Christ to mind, that by our re -

love in ac - tion help us rise and pledge our word.
 care and good - ness fear will die and hope in - crease.
 quest for jus - tice may we hal - low life's brief span.
 sponse and ser - vice earth its des - ti - ny may find.

Fred Kaan's most widely published text was first sung at Pilgrim Church in Plymouth, England, at a service of worship marking Human Rights Day in 1965. It has been used for many subsequent occasions, including the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations.

Tune: WESTMINSTER ABBEY 8.7.8.7.8.7.
 Henry Purcell, c. 1680
 Arr. Ernest Hawkins, 1842