

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
“Center Church”



United Church of Christ - ONA
One Church Street

South Hadley, Massachusetts 01075

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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 17, 2026

Don't waste time waiting for inspiration. Begin, and inspiration will find you.

H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

PRELUDE

Two settings of *Bryn Calfaria*
Come Thou Font of Every Blessing

E. Landin, D.N Johnson

T. Smith & D. Hustad

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASSING OF THE PEACE

INTROIT

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: God rules over heaven and earth.

People: God rules to bring us new life.

Leader: God sends us the Spirit of Christ.

People: To take us to the ends of the earth.

Leader: Teach us your ways; give us your wisdom.

People: That we bring healing and hope in Jesus' name.

***HYMN**

Alleluia! Gracious Jesus!

black # 257

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

O God, so often we are short-sighted in our thinking and serving. We focus only on our own needs, hopes and plans. We are too content to just wait: wait for our prayers to be answered, wait for your second appearing. Shake us up by the power of your Holy Spirit.

Assurance of Forgiveness

God gives us partners in faith both near and far so that together our work helps give life and substance to the presence of Jesus. 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

Acts 1:1-11

1 In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and teach ² until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. **3** After his suffering^[a] he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. **4** While staying^[b] with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait there for the promise of the Father. “This,” he said, “is what you have heard from me; **5** for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with^[c] the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

6 So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” **7** He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. **8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” **9** When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. **10** While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. **11** They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

SERMON

WAITING

*HYMN

Christ, Enthroned in Heavenly Splendor

black # 258

OFFERING

Invitation

Offertory

*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

A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing

black # 259

*BENEDICTION

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE *Threefold Amen*

POSTLUDE

Deo gracias

H. Willan

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:	Bob Judge
Organist/Pianist:	Larry Schipull
2nd Prelude Organist:	Cynthia J. Morrell
Choir Director:	Ben Coakley
Deacon:	Randy Hyvonen

Remember to wear RED next week for Pentecost Sunday.



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
 John Hoffman’s parents, Jean and John
 Hitesh Shroff, 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



You are in luck – sweet treats left over from the Spring tea will be available for purchase at Fellowship Time – just \$3.00 per box – get yours before they are gone!

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



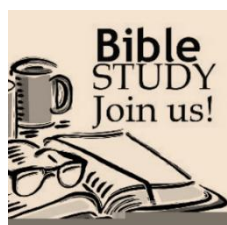
Center Church Announcements

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.

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.



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 churched, 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 a meal TODAY.** Come and help. Come to the worship which starts at 4:30. You will be blessed.



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**.

This Week at Center Church

Today	Worship 10am Deacons following worship Cathedral in the Night 4:30pm
Thursday	Bible Study 11am AA 1:30pm
Sunday	Worship 10am Pentecost Sunday Recognizing Graduates (Children, Youth and teachers will remain in worship until after the celebration of the graduates. All will then head up to the Promised Land.)



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.

The Strengthen the Church Offering reflects the shared commitment of people across the United Church of Christ to build up the church together. Gifts to this offering support ministry innovation within the Southern New England Conference, with a special focus this year on expanding opportunities for Youth and Young Adults. With new leadership and renewed energy, these ministries are growing to meet young people where they are and invite them more fully into faith, community, and leadership. Through your generosity, you strengthen the Body of Christ in Southern New England and support our sibling congregations across the wider UCC.



Southern New England Conference
United Church of Christ
Living the Love & Justice of Jesus

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



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. **We are now accepting donations - drop off times will be announced soon!**

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.



Members of the Hampshire Association, UCC are invited to attend the installation of

Rev. Susan Cartmell

South Congregational Church 1066 South East Street Amherst, MA

Sunday, May 17, 2026 3PM

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**Larry Picard, Lay Pastor**

North Congregational Church, UCC 243 River Drive Hadley, MA 01035

**Sunday, May 24, 2026 3PM**

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 4<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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.*

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



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



ACCREDITED

[www.SilverLakeCT.org](http://www.SilverLakeCT.org)

**[Silver Lake Camp & Retreat Center](#)**

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

223 Low Road | Sharon, CT 06069 | 860.364.5526 | Fax: 860.364.1000

[slrc@sneucc.org](mailto:slrc@sneucc.org)



## Alleluia! Gracious Jesus!

*Eph. 1:15-23; Heb. 9:11-14**William C. Dix, 1867; alt.*

1 Al - le - lu - ia! Gra - cious Je - sus! Yours the  
 2 Al - le - lu - ia! Not as or - phans are we  
 3 Al - le - lu - ia! Bread of an - gels, you on  
 4 Al - le - lu - ia! Christ e - ter - nal, noth - ing

scep - ter, yours the throne! Al - le - lu - ia! Yours the  
 left in sor - row now. Al - le - lu - ia! You are  
 earth our food, our stay. Al - le - lu - ia! Here the  
 can dis - rupt your reign; Al - le - lu - ia! Born of

tri - umph, yours the vic - to - ry a - lone!  
 near us; faith be - lieves, nor ques - tions how.  
 sin - ful flee to you from day to day.  
 Mar - y, heaven and earth are your do - main.

Hark! the songs of peace - ful Zi - on  
 Though the cloud from sight re - ceived you  
 In - ter - ces - sor, friend of sin - ners,  
 Hu - man life you ful - ly en - tered,

ASCENSION

thun - der like a might - y flood; Je - sus, out of  
 when the for - ty days were o'er, shall our hearts for -  
 earth's Re - deem - er, plead for me, and the songs that  
 tend - ing those we count the least, serv - ing both as

ev - ery na - tion you've re - deemed us by your blood.  
 get your prom - ise, "I am with you ev - er - more."  
 sound in heav - en will re - peat your gra - cious plea.  
 Priest and Vic - tim in the eu - cha - ris - tic feast.

*William C. Dix, manager of a marine insurance company, was also a gifted writer who made a significant contribution to hymnody. This hymn was written to fill a need for communion hymns in Church of England hymnals.*

Tune: HYFRYDOL 8.7.8.7.D.  
 Rowland H. Prichard, 1844  
 Arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906

## Christ, Enthroned in Heavenly Splendor

*John 6:51; Heb. 9:26; 1 Cor. 10:4**George Hugh Bourne, 1874; alt.*

1 Christ, en-throned in heav-en-ly splen-dor, first be-got-ten from the dead,  
 2 Here our hum - ble hom - age pay we, here in lov - ing rev - erence bow;  
 3 Pas - chal Lamb, your of - fering fin - ished once for all when you were slain,  
 4 Life - im - part - ing heav-en-ly man - na, strick-en rock with stream-ing side,

You a - lone, our strong de - fend - er, now lift up your peo - ple's head.  
 Here for faith's dis - cern-ment pray we, lest we fail to know you now.  
 In its full - ness un - di - min-ished shall for - ev - er - more re - main,  
 Heaven and earth with loud ho - san - na wor-ship you, the Lamb who died,

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!  
 Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!  
 Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!  
 Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

Christ, our true and liv - ing Bread. Christ, our true and liv - ing Bread.  
 You are here, we ask not how. You are here, we ask not how.  
 Cleans-ing hearts from ev - ery stain. Cleans-ing hearts from ev - ery stain.  
 Risen, as - cend - ed, glo - ri - fied! Risen, as - cend - ed, glo - ri - fied!

*This post-communion hymn was one of seven by Anglican clergyman Bourne, who was headmaster at Chardstock College in England. It was first published in the United States in The Hymnal of the Evangelical and Reformed Church (1941).*

Tune: BRYN CALFARIA 8.7.8.7.4.7.  
 William Owen, Y Perl Cerddoral, 1852

## A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing

259

*The Venerable Bede (673–735)**St. 1–2, transl. Elizabeth R. Charles, 1858; alt.**St. 3, transl. Benjamin Webb, 1854; alt.**Phil. 2:1–11; Eph. 1:15–23**Fanfare (introduction and coda, and interlude if desired)*

1 A hymn of glo - ry let us sing, new  
 2 You are a pres - ent joy, O Christ, tri -  
 3 O ris - en Christ, as - cend-ed now, to

hymns through-out the world shall ring; By a new way none  
 um - phant love once sac - ri - ficed, And great the light in  
 your blessed name all knees shall bow; You are, while end - less

ev - er trod Christ shares once more the throne of God.  
 you we see to guide us to e - ter - ni - ty.  
 a - ges run, in Tri - une God - head ev - er One.

*This Latin hymn by the Venerable Bede is possibly among the first Christian hymns written in England. Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica is an important source of early English history.*

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Tune: DEO GRACIAS L.M.  
 "The Agincourt Song," England, c. 1415  
 Arr. E. Power Biggs, 1947; adapt. Richard Proulx, 1985  
 For another harmonization, see 184, 209