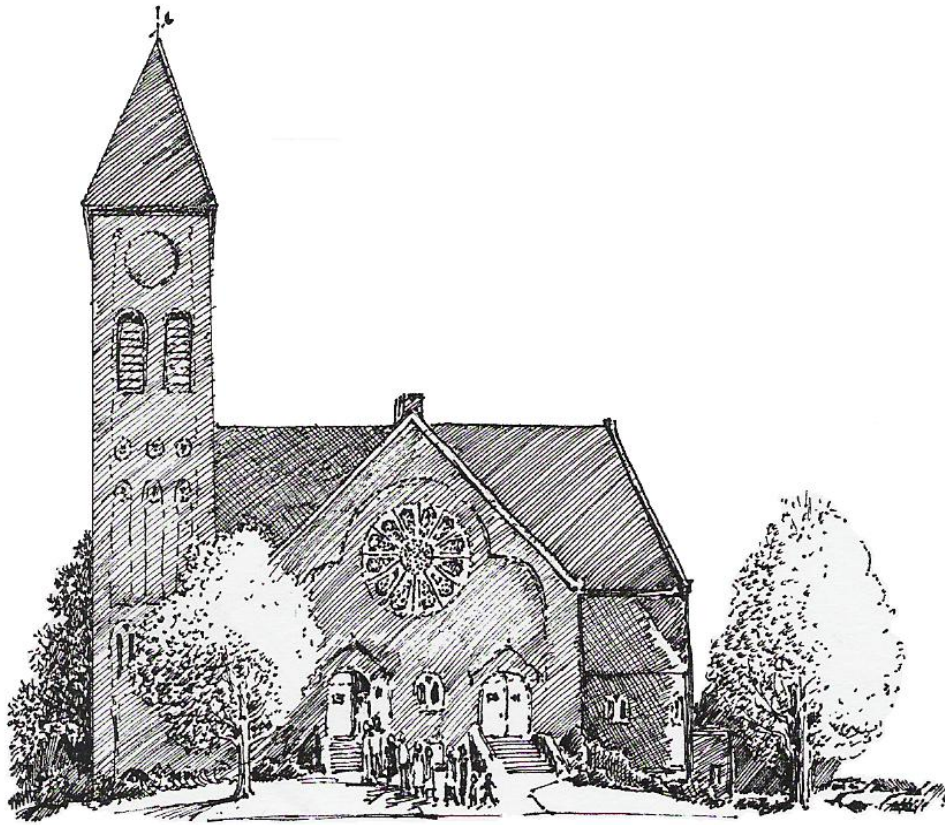




FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
“Center Church”



United Church of Christ - ONA
One Church Street

South Hadley, Massachusetts 01075

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email: centerchurch@verizon.net

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Facebook: Center Church of South Hadley MA

Instagram: @centerchurchsouthhadley

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!

Welcome to our friends from the Granby Church of Christ

August 16, 2026

*People who say "it is impossible", should not interrupt those
who are trying to make it possible.* Arnold Schwarzenegger

PRELUDE

*Solemn Meditation
Romanza
Theme from a Ballade*

T. Birchwood
S. Scott
arr. W. Barnett

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASSING OF THE PEACE

INTROIT

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: How wonderful it is when we can come together in unity.

People: We are Christ's creation by water and the word.

Leader: Christ came and sought us in love to set us free.

People: How wonderful it is when we can come together in unity.

***HYMN**

The Church's One Foundation

black #386

JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE

MORNING PRAYERS

Prayer of Confession

**God of all, creator of all things larger than our imagining
and small beyond our notice, we praise you that everything bears
your mark. Yet, we confess that we have limited our perception of
your unlimited grace. Hear us, heal us, deliver us from the
boundaries we create. Set us free to serve you in the ministries to
which you have called us.**

Words of Assurance:

In the name of Jesus, you are forgiven. Praise be to God!

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

Matthew 15:21-28

²¹ Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²² Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." ²³ But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." ²⁴ He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." ²⁵ But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." ²⁶ He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." ²⁷ She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." ²⁸ Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed from that moment.

SERMON

PERSISTENCE PAVES THE WAY FOR POSSIBILITY

*HYMN

O Christ, the Healer, We Have Come

black #175

OFFERING

Invitation

Offertory

Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart

G. Croly/F. Atkinson

*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**

We Shall Overcome

black #570

***BENEDICTION**

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE** *Threefold Amen*

POSTLUDE

Postludium in F

G. Stairs

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:	Mia Lederer
Organist/Choir Director:	Cynthia J. Morrell
Soloists:	Dianne Clinton & Sharyn Kovalesky
Deacon:	Randy Hyvonen



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."

This Week at Center Church

Wednesday	Breakfast and Conversation 8am
Thursday	Bible Study 11am AA 1:30pm Dance Lessons
Sunday	Worship 10am



PLEASE KEEP THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE IN YOUR PRAYERS

Continual:

Eileen Halkyard
Elisa's young friend Elija, addiction recovery
Eunice Howes
Elisa Morrison's brother Carl, with heart issue
Leila (Addison) Mulder,
attending boarding school
Fay Paquette
Bernice Strong
Nikki Wolf, Linda's granddaughter
Those struggling with addiction,
with cancer, and with chronic disease



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:

Family and friends of Bobbie Ayers
who passed away July 8
Cynthia Baker
Dennis Banks, friend of Karen and
Estelle Anderson, with cancer
Neil Fairman, friend of Karen Anderson
Robin Glossner, undergoing chemo
John Hoffman's parents, Jean and John
The LaFleur family on the passing of
Becky's Dad, Richard Racine
Michael Nemuth, Anita Sarro's son,
undergoing treatment
Hitesh Shroff, with cancer

We will have a brief hymn sing next Sunday, August 23, following the sermon. Be thinking of a favorite hymn from out of the New Century Hymnal (Black hymnal). We will sing two verses.

THE MINISTRY AT CENTER CHURCH

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

Christian Education Program

Children: Vicki Scherer, Coordinator - Julia Nogales, Teacher

Youth Coordinator: Kenneth Mulder

Nursery Caregiver:

Music

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



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 Conversation – August 19th at 8am in Fellowship Hall – Topic: Racism - Readings are available on the table in the Church Street entrance.



Bible Study continues in August. **August 20** - Genesis 1:1-2:4a Rest made Holy; **August 27** - Genesis 22:1-14 It shall be provided. The study will be held in the Conference Room at Loomis Village from 11-12. You need not be a resident at Loomis to attend.



OPERATION BACKPACK



Sheila Adams' Operation Backpack is in full swing for the coming school year. As we have for several years, Center Church will continue to collect items to help our local kids. Sheila needs all kinds of school supplies to help students start the year right, including some things you may not think of: large backpacks for older students, flash drives, 1 ½ " binders, 3 subject notebooks. A carload of supplies

has already been delivered to Operation Backpack, thanks to you all. There are collection boxes in the sanctuary and downstairs by side entrance for your convenience. This congregation is a blessing to your community. Thank you. Your Outreach Team.

If you are in need of backpacks or school supplies for your child/ren, please contact Shiela Adams at shoperationbackpack@yahoo.com or call her at 413-536-5316. She will need child's name and grade they are entering, as well as a phone number at which you can be reached.



FALL FAIR & TAG SALE

September 12th and 13th

When can I drop off donation? A frequently asked question. In August, we will be accepting donations Monday – Thursday, 9am to noon. If you do drop off when we not “open,” we appreciate that you put your donation in the marked area. Believe it or not there is an organized system. Of course, donations are always accepted on Sundays after Church! August 28th is the last day to donate goods.

You are welcome to join us on Tuesday mornings. Many hands and volunteer hours are needed to make this fundraising event successful. An hour or two makes a huge difference. There is always something to do. The Fall Tag Sale, September 12 and 13, is an all-church event. Our success is dependent on the items being sold and your willingness to help in the many tasks it takes to put it together.

Be sure to review the “What Does Not Sell” page in the July-August newsletter, as you pack up your treasures that need a new home. Thank you!



November 21st and 22nd

The Holiday Bazaar is planned for November 21-22, still 6 months away in the future, but on the drawing board! We will host talented crafters as we did last November, so we are starting the planning. We want to **open the invitation to crafters to plan to join us for the weekend of November 21-22**, 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*



& Tag Sale

September 12th

9am – 4pm

September 13th

Noon – 4pm

The Church's One Foundation

Eph. 2:13-22; 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 3:11

Samuel J. Stone, 1866; alt.

1 The church's one foun - da - tion is Je - sus Christ our Lord;
 2 E - lect from ev - ery na - tion, yet one o'er all the earth,
 3 'Mid toil and trib - u - la - tion, and tu - mult of our war,
 4 Yet we on earth have un - ion with God, the Three-in - One,

we are Christ's new cre - a - tion by wa - ter and the word;
 one char - ter of sal - va - tion, one God, one faith, one birth,
 we wait the con - sum - ma - tion of peace for - ev - er - more;
 and mys - tic sweet com - mu - nion with those whose rest is won.

From heaven Christ came and sought us in love to set us free;
 One name to - geth - er bless - ing, one ho - ly food we share,
 Till with the vi - sion glo - rious, our long - ing eyes are blessed,
 O hap - py ones and ho - ly! God, give us grace that we,

with pre - cious blood Christ bought us for all e - ter - ni - ty.
 to one hope we are press - ing, at one in work and prayer.
 and the great church vic - to - rious shall be the church at rest.
 like them, the meek and low - ly, may live e - ter - nal - ly.

Like the writings of Ambrose many centuries earlier, this hymn was born out of a doctrinal dispute. The young priest Samuel J. Stone composed twelve hymns on the articles of the Apostles' Creed in support of those reacting against nontraditional views of biblical scholarship. This hymn is based on article nine, "the Church's One Foundation."

Tune: AURELIA 7.6.7.6.D.
 Samuel S. Wesley, 1864

O Christ, the Healer, We Have Come

175

Fred Pratt Green, 1967

Matt. 8:5-13; 15:21-28; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 7:1-10; 9:37-43a

Unison

1 O Christ, the heal - er, we have come to
 2 From ev - ery ail - ment flesh en - dures our
 3 In con - flicts that de - stroy our health we
 4 Grant that we all, made one in faith, in

pray for health, to plead for friends. How can we fail to be re -
 bod - ies clam - or to be freed. Yet in our hearts we would con -
 rec - og - nize the world's dis - ease; Our com - mon life de - clares our
 your com - mu - ni - ty may find. The whole - ness that, en - rich - ing

stored when reached by love that nev - er ends?
 fess that whole - ness is our deep - est need.
 ills. Is there no cure, O Christ, for these?
 us, shall reach and pros - per hu - man - kind.

Fred Pratt Green wrote this hymn in 1967 at the suggestion of the committee compiling Hymns and Songs, when they noted the need for a new healing text. Green immediately produced this prayer for wholeness of body, mind, and spirit.

Tune: KENTRIDGE L.M.

Richard Gieseke, 1988

Alternate tune: TALLIS' CANON

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We Shall Overcome

570

United States traditional

John 8:31-32; Rom. 12:21; 2 Cor. 13:11

1 We shall o - ver - come, we shall o - ver -

2 We'll go hand in hand, we'll go hand in

3 We are not a - fraid, we are not a -

4 Our God will see us through, our God will see us

come, we shall o - ver - come some day;

hand, we'll go hand in hand some day;

fraid, we are not a - fraid to - day;

through, our God will see us through some day;

(1-6) Oh, deep in my heart, I do be - lieve,

we shall o - ver - come some day.

we'll go hand in hand some day.

we are not a - fraid to - day.

our God will see us through some day.

5 The truth shall make us free . . . some day.

6 We shall live in peace . . . some day.

This anthem of the 1960s civil rights movement was frequently sung at mass meetings and marches. Several sources have been cited as its origins, including the spiritual "No more auction block for me" based on the tune known as Sicilian Mariners; an old Baptist hymn "I'll Be All Right"; and part of the text from C. A. Tindley's gospel hymn "I'll Overcome Someday."

Tune: WE SHALL OVERCOME Irr.
United States traditional
Harm. J. Jefferson Cleveland, 1981