



**CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**  
United Church of Christ  
5 Summer St. Lynnfield MA 01940  
781-334-3050 [www.Centre-Church.org](http://www.Centre-Church.org)  
We Welcome Everyone: An Open and Affirming Church

Rev Thomas Bentley, Pastor  
Douglas W. Hodgkins, Organist/Choir Director  
Leah O'Brien, Director of Tower Day School  
Alison O'Connor, Church Administrator



*Rev. Thomas Bentley*

**CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

United Church of Christ

5 Summer Street, Lynnfield, Massachusetts

**October 8, 2023**

**10:00 am**

## WE GATHER

### PRELUDE

*The Solid Rock*

Broughton

### GREETING

#### CALL TO WORSHIP

*Leader: Welcome to God's house, a place of faith.*

*People: From our homes, we come seeking God's word.*

*Leader: Here you will find nourishment and hope.*

*People: May we learn lessons of courage and peace.*

*Leader: Here you will find rest from your struggles*

*People: Lord, prepare our hearts to receive your words that we may leave this holy house of faith and return to our homes, encouraged and challenged to be your people. AMEN.*

#### \*OPENING HYMN

*To You O God All Creatures Sing*

#17

#### OPENING PRAYER (in unison)

Gracious God, you have called us to be your faithful witnesses. We struggle with this because so often we are caught up in our doubts and our despair about this world. Help us to turn again to you, living in your household of freedom and peace, of reconciliation and witness. We offer this prayer in Jesus' name. AMEN.

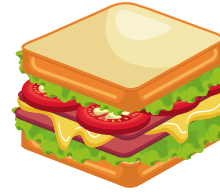
#### OLD TESTAMENT READING

Isaiah 5:1-7 (pg 621)

**The Message**

Margaret Waugh

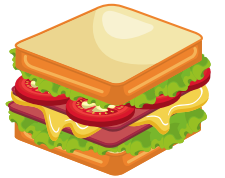
I'll sing a ballad to the one I love,  
a love ballad about his vineyard:  
The one I love had a vineyard,  
a fine, well-placed vineyard.  
He hoed the soil and pulled the weeds,  
and planted the very best vines.  
He built a lookout, built a winepress,  
a vineyard to be proud of.  
He looked for a vintage yield of grapes,  
but for all his pains he got garbage grapes.  
"Now listen to what I'm telling you,  
you who live in Jerusalem and Judah.  
What do you think is going on  
between me and my vineyard?"



## Soup & Sandwich Sunday



Join us for lunch on Sunday, October 22nd, right after the service. Bring a crockpot of your favorite soup or a dish of sandwiches and enjoy some heavenly food, music, and fellowship. That Sunday we will be collecting cans of soup to help out Haven From Hunger. Sign up sheets are in the Narthex



## ALTAR FLOWER DONATIONS

If you are interested in donating altar flowers, please contact Margaret Waugh at [mcwaugh@aol.com](mailto:mcwaugh@aol.com) or 617-548-0152

#### Worship Notes.

**Music licenses:** One License with license #A-733437, and CCLI License #A-2267261 and Streaming #CSPL169342, Size A

About our Pastor ~ Rev. Tom Bentley

Tom was ordained into the UCC in 1980 and has served many different UCC congregations in Massachusetts. Most of these calls were as a Designated Term Interim Pastor helping churches develop strategic planning to meet challenging changes. Up until 2020 Tom always pastored as a bi-vocational minister, maintaining a second career in human services, community organizing, and housing development. From 1986 Tom became the full-time founding Executive Director of Emmaus Inc. in Haverhill where he served 16 years. This non-profit is now the largest shelter provider in Essex County, assisting over 1,000 men, women, and children each year.

As an independent consultant since 1990 Tom also oversaw the funding and construction of hundreds of subsidized units, most of which targeted disadvantaged families and formerly homeless individuals. For decades he worked with non-profits throughout New England helping them develop services and housing for low-income groups. Tom likewise consulted for cities and towns to help them meet their goals for affordable housing. This often involved creating new homes for first-time homebuyers as well as renters.

In 2011 while pastoring Trinity Congregational Church in Gloucester, Tom organized and directed The Grace Center, a day services program for homeless and low-income adults. This agency now serves over 70 men and women each day.

In 2020 Tom reduced his housing consulting and human services work and concentrated his professional time exclusively to being a Designated Term Pastor at the First Church UCC in Rowley. He is excited to be beginning his new ministry as the Designated Term Pastor at Centre Congregational Church UCC in Lynnfield.

Tom lives in Gloucester with his wife Jeanne, who is a literacy specialist at Cathedral High School in Boston. They have three adult-age children. One year ago, Tom and Jeanne became grandparents to their first grandchild, Harrison.

Along with parish ministry and being a Grandad, Tom likes to direct his creative passions to oil painting, fiction writing, gourmet cooking, hiking, horticulture and most recently golf where his handicap is beyond calculation.



Can you think of anything I could have done to my vineyard that I didn't do?

When I expected good grapes, why did I get bitter grapes?

"Well now, let me tell you what I'll do to my vineyard:

I'll tear down its fence and let it go to ruin.

I'll knock down the gate and let it be trampled.

I'll turn it into a patch of weeds, untended, uncared for— thistles and thorns will take over.

I'll give orders to the clouds:

'Don't rain on that vineyard, ever!'"

Do you get it? The vineyard of God-of-the-Angel-Armies is the country of Israel.

All the men and women of Judah are the garden he was so proud of.

He looked for a crop of justice and saw them murdering each other.

He looked for a harvest of righteousness and heard only the moans of victims.

OFFERING

Call to the Offering

Offertory

\*Doxology

*Here I am Lord*

Shuttle

Tune: Old 100th

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise Christ, all creatures here below;

Praise Holy Spirit evermore;

Praise Living God, whom we adore

Prayer of Dedication

Joys and Concerns

PASTORAL PRAYER

**THE LORDS PRAYER (in unison)**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy 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 thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, Amen**

**GOSPEL READING**

**Matthew 21:33-46 (pg899) The Message**

**Margaret Waugh**

**“Here’s another story. Listen closely. There was once a man, a wealthy farmer, who planted a vineyard. He fenced it, dug a winepress, put up a watchtower, then turned it over to the farmhands and went off on a trip. When it was time to harvest the grapes, he sent his servants back to collect his profits. “The farmhands grabbed the first servant and beat him up. The next one they murdered. They threw stones at the third but he got away. The owner tried again, sending more servants. They got the same treatment. The owner was at the end of his rope. He decided to send his son. ‘Surely,’ he thought, ‘they will respect my son.’ “But when the farmhands saw the son arrive, they rubbed their hands in greed. ‘This is the heir! Let’s kill him and have it all for ourselves.’ They grabbed him, threw him out, and killed him. “Now, when the owner of the vineyard arrives home from his trip, what do you think he will do to the farmhands?” “He’ll kill them—a rotten bunch, and good riddance,” they answered. “Then he’ll assign the vineyard to farmhands who will hand over the profits when it’s time.”**

**Jesus said, “Right—and you can read it for yourselves in your Bibles:**

**The stone the masons threw out  
is now the cornerstone.**

**This is God’s work;**

**we rub our eyes, we can hardly believe it!**

**“This is the way it is with you. God’s kingdom will be taken back from you and handed over to a people who will live out a kingdom life.**

**Whoever stumbles on this Stone gets shattered; whoever the Stone falls on gets smashed.”**

**When the religious leaders heard this story, they knew it was aimed at them. They wanted to arrest Jesus and put him in jail, but, intimidated by public opinion, they held back. Most people held him to be a prophet of God.**

**ANTHEM**

***There Is A Balm in Gilead***

traditional

**SERMON**

**“Karma, Hubris, and the Salvation of God”**

**Rev Tom Bentley**

**\*CLOSING HYMN**

***For the Beauty of the Earth***

**#28**

**BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE**

***All The People That On Earth Dwell***

Arr. Hughes



Our ushers this morning are Steven Riley & Jim Wilkie

The flowers on the altar today are given by Barbara and Ronald Horwood in memory of Barbara’s mother, Dorothy S. Morse.

Our coffee fellowship hosts this morning are David & Diane Bjorkman