



Please come help assemble Easter baskets on Tuesday nights at 7pm, March 5, 12, and 19.

Donations of baskets, grass, chocolate bunnies, plush animals and much more are needed to meet our goal of 1,000 baskets.

Worship Notes.

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



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



“Razed to the Foundations”

Rev. Thomas Bentley

CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ
5 Summer Street, Lynnfield, Massachusetts

Communion Sunday

March 3, 2024 10:00 am

Prelude *Come Thou Almighty King* Arr. Norian

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship (*from Psalm 19*) Jim Marshall

Leader: Weary and overwhelmed, we gather.

People: God's holy word revives us.

Leader: Simple and confused, we yield.

People: God's word gives us wisdom.

Leader: Blind and uncomprehending, we await.

People: God's word enlightens our eyes.

Leader: More precious than gold is God's word.

Leader & People: Sweeter than honey are God's commands.

Unison Opening Prayer (*from (1 Corinthians 1, John 2)*) Jim Marshall

O God, your weakness is mightier than human strength, your foolishness is wiser than human wisdom. We rejoice that you are with us today. Open our hearts and discipline our will. Teach us to follow your perfect ways. Test us with your righteous decrees. As with a whip, drive us from unholy living, and turn us toward your holy light. Through your Son, Jesus Christ, comfort and redeem us with your holy gospel. Amen

***Opening Hymn** **"Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross"** **#197**

New Testament Reading Jim Marshall

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

The Message

The Message that points to Christ on the Cross seems like sheer silliness to those hellbent on destruction, but for those on the way of salvation it makes perfect sense. This is the way God works, and most powerfully as it turns out. It's written,

**"I'll turn conventional wisdom on its head,
I'll expose so-called experts as shams."**



WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE

Pastor: Let us unite in the words of remembrance...

All: We remember and give thanks for such love and Goodness, and mercy.

WORDS OF BLESSING

HOLY COMMUNION

The pastor will offer instructions as how to receive the elements, and when to eat the bread and drink the unfermented wine.

PRAYER FOLLOWING COMMUNION *(unison)*

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

Closing Hymn *"Before Your Cross, O Jesus"* #191

Benediction

Postlude *It is Well With My Soul* Arr. Norian



Our ushers today are David Bjorkman, Kathi Martin,
Margaret Waugh, and Jeff Langill

Please join us in the Narthex for Coffee Hour which is hosted this morning by Linda Ladd and Social and Environmental Ministry

So where can you find someone truly wise, truly educated, truly intelligent in this day and age? Hasn't God exposed it all as pretentious nonsense? Since the world in all its fancy wisdom never had a clue when it came to knowing God, God in his wisdom took delight in using what the world considered stupid—preaching, of all things!—to bring those who trust him into the way of salvation.

While Jews clamor for miraculous demonstrations and Greeks go in for philosophical wisdom, we go right on proclaiming Christ, the Crucified. Jews treat this like an anti-miracle—and Greeks pass it off as absurd. But to us who are personally called by God himself—both Jews and Greeks—Christ is God's ultimate miracle and wisdom all wrapped up in one. Human wisdom is so cheap, so impotent, next to the seeming absurdity of God. Human strength can't begin to compete with God's "weakness."

Children's Time

*Children age 4-12 are invited to join us for the Kid's Classroom.
Children will return to sit with their families for Communion.*

Call to Offering

Offertory

Over My Head

Podd

*Hymn of Praise

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ, all creatures here below;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;
Praise Living God, who we adore.**

Prayer of Dedication

Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's 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.

Anthem *Here at Thy Table Lord* **Smith**

Gospel Reading **Jim Marshall**
John 2:13-25 *The Message*

When the Passover Feast, celebrated each spring by the Jews, was about to take place, Jesus traveled up to Jerusalem. He found the Temple teeming with people selling cattle and sheep and doves. The loan sharks were also there in full strength.

Jesus put together a whip out of strips of leather and chased them out of the Temple, stampeding the sheep and cattle, upending the tables of the loan sharks, spilling coins left and right. He told the dove merchants, "Get your things out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a shopping mall!" That's when his disciples remembered the Scripture, "Zeal for your house consumes me."

But the Jews were upset. They asked, "What credentials can you present to justify this?" Jesus answered, "Tear down this Temple and in three days I'll put it back together."

They were indignant: "It took forty-six years to build this Temple, and you're going to rebuild it in three days?" But Jesus was talking about his body as the Temple. Later, after he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered he had said this. They then put two and two together and believed both what was written in Scripture and what Jesus had said.

During the time he was in Jerusalem, those days of the Passover Feast, many people noticed the signs he was displaying and, seeing they pointed straight to God, entrusted their lives to him. But Jesus didn't entrust his life to them. He knew them inside and out, knew how untrustworthy they were. He didn't need any help in seeing right through them.

Message: "Razed to the Foundations"

Sacrament of Holy Communion
INVITATION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (*unison*)

Most loving and gracious God. Forgive our sins; those we commit knowingly and those we do without perception of how they hurt others. Open our hearts to your Holy Spirit to hear your truth, to understand our failure and to reach a new level of understanding. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Pastor: Anyone in Christ becomes a new person altogether; the past is finished and gone, everything has become fresh and new.

All: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven

COMMUNION PRAYER -

Pastor "...and so with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise you name and join their unending hymn:

All: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord. God of power and Might.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes

In the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

"Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross" #197

1 Jesus, keep me near the cross;
there a precious fountain,
free to all, a healing stream,
flows from Calvary's mountain.

Refrain:

In the cross, in the cross,
be my glory ever,
till my ransomed soul shall find
rest beyond the river.

2 Near the cross, a trembling soul,
love and mercy found me;
there the bright and morning star
sheds its beams around me. [Refrain]

3 Near the cross! O Lamb of God,
bring its scenes before me;
help me live from day to day
with its shadow o'er me. [Refrain]

4 Near the cross I'll watch and wait,
hoping, trusting ever,
till I reach the golden strand,
just beyond the river. [Refrain]

"Before Your Cross, O Jesus" #191

1 Before your cross, O Jesus,
our lives are judged today;
the meaning of our eager strife
is tested by your way.

Across our restless living
the light streams from your cross,
and by its clear, revealing beams
we measure gain and loss.

2 The hopes that lead us onward,
the fears that hold us back,
our will to dare great things for God,
the courage that we lack,
The faith we keep in goodness,
our love, as low or pure,
on all, the judgment of the cross
falls steady, clear, and sure.

3 Yet humbly, in our striving,
we rise to face its test.
We crave the power to do your will
as once you did it best.
On us let now the healing
of your great Spirit fall,
and make us brave and full of joy
to answer to your call.