

September 3, 2017

Finally, one cannot combat evil, especially the evil within, on one's own. You cannot be good by yourself. One of the first defenses against evil is to acknowledge that one needs help against it.

Peter Gomes

PRELUDE

*Communion in Christ
In the Silence of this Moment
Beach Spring*

T. Kendall

F. Ritter

E. L. Diemer, R. Lau

*Before the candles are lit, please greet your neighbors with God's hospitality.
Once they are glowing, please celebrate your prayers with God.
When they are extinguished, carry God's light into the world.*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASSING OF THE PEACE

INTROIT

Be Still And Know

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: We gather, as those called to worship God.

People: We gather, as those called to follow Christ.

Leader: We gather, as those empowered by the Holy Spirit.

All: We gather, that we may be scattered in service and witness.

***HYMN**

Come to Tend God's Garden

black #586

JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE

MORNING PRAYERS

Prayer of Confession

We grieve that we are not always those who follow you in spirit and in truth. When you call upon us to lose our lives in order to gain a greater life, sometimes our hearts shrink with fear as we wonder what that might mean for us. We forget that true life is within struggles. Have mercy on us, loving God. For you are the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Amen

Assurance of Forgiveness

Pastoral Prayer and Prayers for Nations

Lord's Prayer (debts)

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

Congregational Response

769

Hear our prayer, O God, Hear our prayer O God

Incline your ear to us, and grant us Your peace. Amen

***HYMN**

In Christ There Is No East or West

black # 395

READING FROM THE SCRIPTURES Romans 12: 9-21 page 987

⁹Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹²Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. ¹³Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. ¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. ¹⁷Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. ¹⁸If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

SERMON

IT'S ABOUT COMMUNITY

How can you exhibit following Jesus? It will take a lifetime IN COMMUNITY.

OFFERING

Invitation

Offertory Anthem *We're a Fellowship of Believers*

J. Althouse

***Doxology (unison)**

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**

As We Gather at Your Table

black # 332

COMMUNION

Invitation

Communion Prayer

Words of Institution

Distribution of the Bread and Cup

It is our tradition to hold each of the elements until all are served so that we may partake together. [Rice cake pieces are offered for those with allergies to gluten.]

Prayer of Thanksgiving (unison)

Bread of Life, Cup of Hope, you restore us to wholeness when we turn to you and confess what separates us from you. We are grateful for how over and over you bless us with new beginnings. Now may we be courageous in sharing Jesus' peace, truth and light. Amen

***HYMN** *Send Down Thy Truth, O God* red # 237

***BENEDICTION**

***CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE** *Threefold Amen* # 812

POSTLUDE *Praise Him! Praise Him!* M. McDonald

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

Please stand if you are comfortable.

In our Service Today

Preacher: Rev. Lori J. Souder
Organist/Choir Director: Cynthia J. Morrell
Soloist: David Morrell
Greeter: Linda Wolf
Reader: Wendy Williams
Head Deacon: Linda Laderach
Head Usher: Randy Hyvonen

The **Adult CE and Membership Teams** will host Coffee Hour during September.

THE MINISTRY AT CENTER CHURCH

Ministers: All Church Members
Senior Minister Rev. Lori J. Souder
Minister Emeritus: Rev. Charles P. Blakney

Christian Education Program

Children: Martha Guild
Youth: Claire Houston
Adult: Randy Purinton and Betsy Bergen, Team Chairs

Music Program

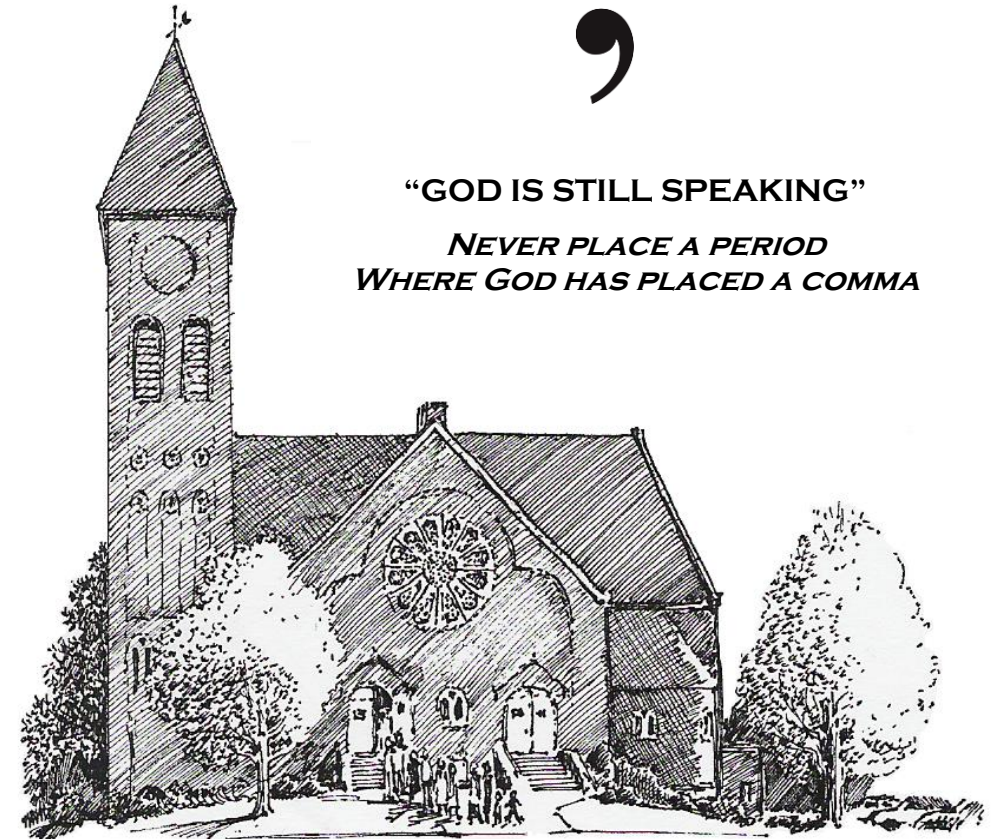
Organist: Larry Schipull
Choir Director: Cheryl Cobb
Associate in Music: Cynthia Morrell

Office Administrator: Cynthia Jubinville
Sexton: Bob Farman



“GOD IS STILL SPEAKING”

**NEVER PLACE A PERIOD
WHERE GOD HAS PLACED A COMMA**



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ - ONA
One Church Street
South Hadley, Massachusetts 01075
(413) 532-2262

email: centerchurch@verizon.net

website: www.centerchurchsouthhadley.org



The two center sections of the sanctuary are equipped with a hearing loop. Turn on the T-coil in your hearing aid and sit in one of these sections for better hearing.