

*The First Congregational Church
of West Brookfield
United Church of Christ*




October 12, 2025; 10 a.m.

The root word of Shalom is “shalam”. In the translation of Exodus 21-22, shalom is translated as “make it good”, “shall surely pay”, “make full restitution” or to “restore”. The ancient Hebrew meaning of shalam was “to make something whole”. Not just regarding practical restoration of things that were lost or stolen. But with an overall sense of fullness and completeness in mind, body and estate. This meaning of wholeness carries over into the word “shalom.” In Hebrew, the word translated as “well-being”, “well”, and “in good health” is all one word – shalom. True biblical shalom means an inward sense of completeness or wholeness. Although it can describe the absence of war, a majority of biblical references refer to an inner completeness and tranquility.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Words in **bold** are to be spoken in unison.

 Please stand as you are able.

Congregational Announcements

Pastoral Greeting

Prelude and Candle Lighting

An Opening Prayer

Angela Carville

Leader: Loving God, we are grateful this morning as we remember that across the ages you have guided your people through the wilderness, assuring us of a home in your eternal city.

All: Strengthen us along the way, that we might answer faithfully our call to serve the cities and towns where we live. Help us to trust in your unfailing presence amid all of our fears. Grant us wisdom to discern your way in this world even as we hope for the next. Amen.

 **Hymn**

“Your Servant Comes This Hour”

#566

Stewardship Moment

Bruce Prestwood-Taylor

A Litany

Searching for Shalom, by Ann Weems

Insert

Prayers of the People Sharing Concerns, Joys ~ Pastoral Prayer
~ Lord’s Prayer~

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.

A Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures

Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7

Response: **Word of God, Word of Life, Thanks be to God**

Call to Offering and Offertory Music

(Offering plates are in the front and rear of the sanctuary for your gifts; you may place them in the plates during the music)

✠ Doxology

34 (*Old 100th*)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ, all creatures here below;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;
One God, triune, whom we adore. Amen.

✠ Hymn

"For the Healing of the Nations"

#621

Youth Message

Special Music

Stephen Page

Sermon

"Seeking Shalom"

Rev. Doug Williamson

✠ Hymn

"God of the Sparrow"

#29

✠ Benediction (please be seated)

Postlude



Searching for Shalom

Pastor: I keep searching for shalom, drawing my water from one well after another—but still I thirst for the shower of blessing that is shalom.

All: I yearn for life to be just and merciful and peaceful, but the streets are filled with daily deaths of spirit and flesh ... but no shalom.

Leader: I keep searching for shalom away from crowds and commotion, but peace and quiet don't blot out the pain of broken hearts and broken bodies.

All: I keep searching for shalom, thinking perhaps I'll find it in a quiet field of flowers or in star or sea or snow, but still the innocent are trampled.

Pastor: I keep searching for shalom, standing in holy places, sitting among the saints. Surely in the sanctuary, I will find shalom.

All: I keep searching for shalom but holy places are not magic. Good works and printed prayers do not guarantee shalom.

Leader: Beyond cathedral walls and above ethereal music, the blaring din of death persists. Back in the streets the people still walk in darkness.

All: I keep searching for shalom. I have pursued and sought it. Have I looked in all the wrong places?

Pastor: What is this bonding, this glue among us, this cohesiveness that holds us in the hope of shalom?

All: The longing won't die. The hope keeps emerging like a new sprout that perseveres on the stump of a felled tree.

Leader: Even in the daily barrage of obscenities some new star melts into my eyes and the promise persists.

All: Here in the darkness some new light stirs within me. Here in the streets I find shalom. Shalom lives not in the sanctuary, but in the streets ... in chaos ... on a cross. In the face of Jesus is the peace that passes all understanding, the everlasting Sabbath ... Shalom!



Our Mission and Vision Statement:

We are a church where all are welcome to worship together, to share in fellowship and to grow spiritually in our journey with Christ. We value justice, diversity, and freedom of expression. We strive to serve our community and all God's creation and to spread the love of God to all people.

Welcome members, friends, and visitors to our service this morning! If you are a guest with us, we invite you to sign our guest register and/or fill out a visitor card. Activity bags are available in the back of the sanctuary for children who are with us in worship.

Prayer Requests

Would you like to ask for prayers for someone? You may write your request in the red prayer book on the table located in the back of the sanctuary. A deacon will share them with the pastor. Please see a deacon with any questions.

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