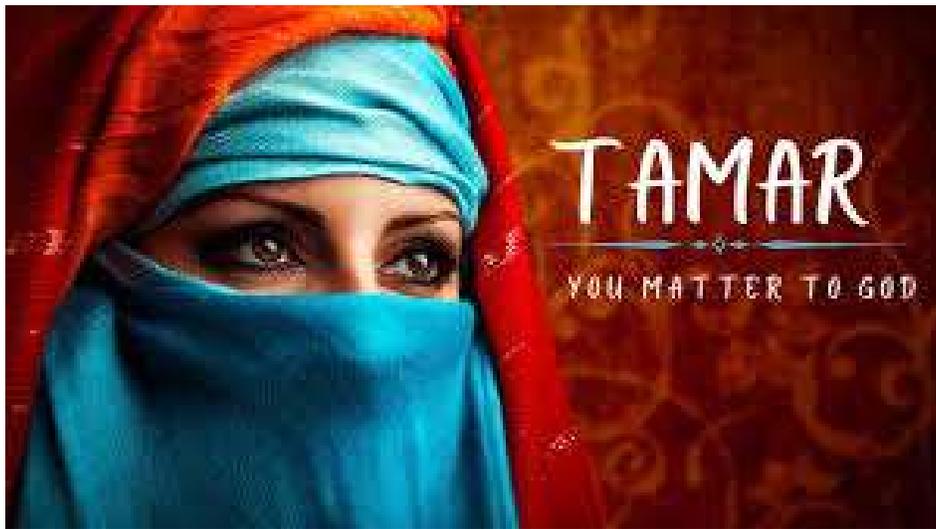


*The First Congregational Church
of West Brookfield
United Church of Christ*



*November 16 2025;
10 a.m.*

REFLECT

As we enter into 'the holiday season,' a kind of relentless cheerfulness is imposed on us from many sides: the jaunty music on the radio, the persistent holiday lights, the bright colors in the store displays. And I hope you do find some happiness, even some joy, in the bright festivities of the season. But Advent, [the season that lies just ahead of us,] is a time when we attend to the humanity of Jesus, which should allow us to attend to our own humanity as well. Our emotions, like Tamar's may be quite complicated and messy."

--Rev. Joanna Harader, Expecting Emmanuel--

TWENTY-THIRD 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

Stephen Page

A Reading from the Prophets

Isaiah 40:27-31

An Opening Affirmation of Hope and Faith

Linda Daskowski

Leader: Do you not know? Have you not heard? **All: The Holy One is the everlasting God, creator of heaven and earth.**

Leader: God's energy flows through the world even when we are bone-tired,

All: God's power gives strength to the vulnerable and the weak.

Leader: Do you not know? Have you not heard? **All: When we wait on the Holy One, God will renew our strength.**

Leader: We shall run. We shall fly. **All: We shall walk boldly together toward the promises of God!**



Hymn

"Arise, Your Light is Come"

#231

A Responsive Affirmation of Faith

Insert

A Reading from Our Hebrew Scriptures

Genesis 38:12-27

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

Prayer Hymn

"Eternal Spirit of the Living Christ"

#475

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.

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.**

Youth Message

Special Music

Stephen Page

Sermon “Bold and Brave; Difficult and Faithful” Rev. Doug Williamson

✠ Hymn

“Community of Christ”

#615

✠ Benediction (please be seated)

Postlude



A Responsive Affirmation of Faith

Pastor: We believe in a sacred power within and around us—a divine spirit, a Holy Spirit, that we call by many names and experience in many ways—that empowers and heals, that calls us forth.

All: We believe in our creativity.

Leader: Making and transforming beauty out of words and notes, images and colors, lines and pictures—and silence.

All: We believe in doing justice.

Pastor: Justice that compels and empowers us to risk whatever we must risk to create a climate in which all people can be who they are.

All: We believe in our dreams.

Leader: We experience the world as it is—in both its ugliness and beauty—and we see what it can become.

All: We believe in hope.

Pastor: We expect changes to occur in our world. We rely on our courage to continue to bring about those changes.

All: We believe in love.

Leader: A passionate love within and around us that laughs and cries, challenges and comforts; a healing love that perseveres.

All: We believe in compassion.

Pastor: We believe God's love will find a way to heal our wounded world—God's persistent love inspiring us to spread acceptance and wholeness.

All: We believe in potential.

Leader: We know who we are—painful as that can be at times—yet we continue to call each other to become more of who we are.

All: We believe in celebrating.

Pastor: We remember and we commemorate. We create rituals. We play and dance and sing and love well.

All: We believe in life.

Leader: Life that wells up within and flows out of us like a streaming fountain.

All: We believe God created us to be good and holy—a sacred part of all creation.

Thanks be to God!

TAMAR'S BLESSING (by Rev. Joanna Harader)

It is not your fault, but it is your grief—

the deaths of those you have loved, the betrayals of those who should be trustworthy,

the ways you have been neglected,

and the shame they have invoked to kindle the fires.

It is your grief,

but it is not your fault.

No matter what they say, you are free, in God:

Free to cry into the night, to wail and weep

and to wear your widow garments for exactly as long as you like; free to name those who betray you—in private and in public—with truthful words, proper or not.

Free to insist on your own existence and importance,

to take up whatever space your body and soul need to inhabit.

Free to turn the shame back on those who deserve it,

to light the fires that warm and enlighten rather than those that destroy.

Wear this blessing as a signet, tie it around your waist as a cord,

carry it as a staff, to support and protect:

May the God of cloud and fire lead you in the wilderness,

providing room for your grief, support for your anger,

comfort for your pain, attention to each part of you.

May the God of cloud and fire burn away your shame

to reveal your shining wisdom, your unmistakable power.



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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