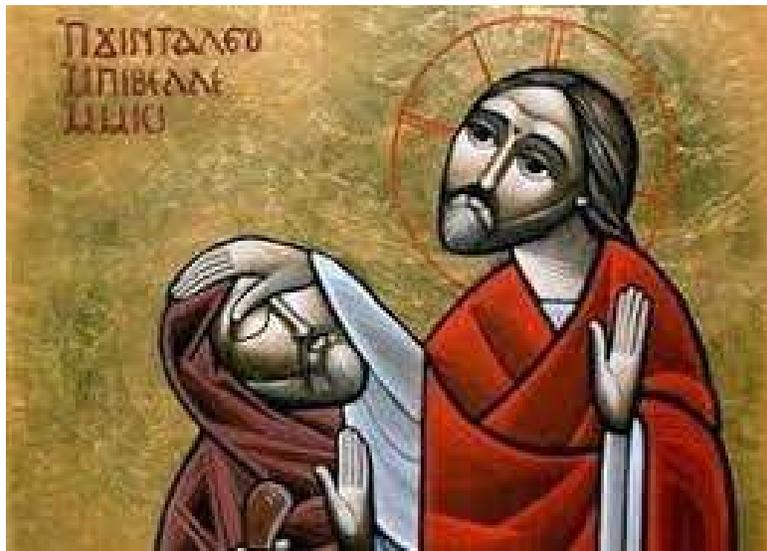


The First Congregational Church of West Brookfield

United Church of Christ



March 15, 2026; 10 a.m.

REFLECT

“Compassion is not a social façade. Compassion is not a sham designed to mask our essential self-centeredness. Compassion is the emotion that links us to those outside ourselves. It is the capacity for outreach. It enables us, drives us, to go beyond ourselves to the beating pulse of the rest of the world. Compassion, then, is a dimension of what it means to be fully human.” -- Sr.

Joan Chittister—

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT
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 Call to Community and Our Response

Angela Carville

Leader: Come, people of God, let us know again who we are, return to the one who gives us life.

All: We come as children of God, longing for a closer walk with our Creator.

Leader: Come, all who see our own weakness and imperfections, for God is not impressed by outward appearances.

All: We respond to God's welcoming love, and rejoice that there is a place for us here.

Leader: Come, all who are blind but long to see, all who stumble in the dark but yearn for light.

All: We are glad for this time of healing and refreshment, this hour of celebration and enlightenment.

Leader: "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light."

All: We are alert to the surprises God has in store for us, eager to see the new possibilities Christ offers.

 **Hymn**

"Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness"

#93

A Unison Prayer of Awareness

Leader: Let us join together in prayer:

All: We lay down our need before you, holy God of compassion and grace, trusting in your great love for us and for all creation. We bear wounds, and we ourselves have wounded others. We open ourselves to the work of your Spirit among us to free us from all that is not of you and to recreate us in your image. Praise and thanksgiving, honor and blessing be to you, divine Fount of healing and love, through your Word of grace made flesh, and your Spirit of holiness and power.

Assurance of God's Love

Leader: Hear the Good News: Nothing in all creation, neither what we do nor what has been done to us, can separate us from the love of God made known in Jesus Christ and poured out on the church through the Spirit. Thanks be to God!

Prayer Hymn (please feel free to remain seated)

"Come and Find the Quiet Center" **#477**

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.

The Gospel

John 9:1-41

Reader: May God bless our hearing and understanding of this reading from our sacred texts.

All: 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)

 **A Doxology**

Tune: # 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 "Nit-Pickers, Wound-Lickers, Goodness Sakers, and Arm Wavers" Rev. Doug Williamson

 **Hymn**

"As a Fire Is Meant for Burning"

#551

 **Benediction** (after which, please be seated for the postlude)

Postlude



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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