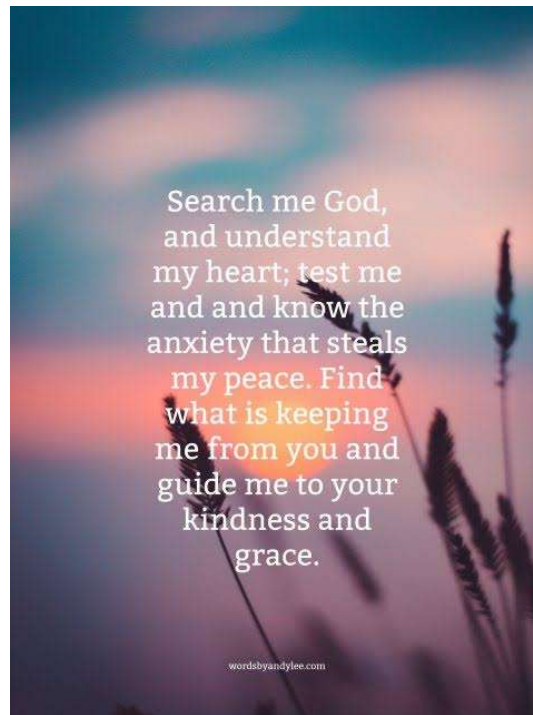


# *The First Congregational Church of West Brookfield*

## *United Church of Christ*



**July 19, 2026; 10 a.m.**

### **REFLECT**

"We are 'not mass-produced but custom-made,' James Limburg writes in his commentary on the Psalms. He tells the story about young Rabbi Zusya, who was quite discouraged about his failures and weaknesses. Said an older rabbi to him, 'When you get to heaven, God is not going to say to you, "Why weren't you Moses?" No, God will say, "Why weren't you Zusya?" So why don't you stop trying to be Moses, and start being the Zusya God created you to be?"' --Kathryn Matthews, Retired Dean of the Amistad Chapel--

**EIGHTH 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**

**A Responsive Opening Prayer**

**Stephen Page**

**Nancy Zurawka**

Leader: All-knowing God, we gather together with praise and thanksgiving for who You are, and for all that You have done for us.

**All: We give thanks that You know us better than we know ourselves—all our thoughts and actions—and yet You love us.**

Leader: No matter where we go or what we do, Your love encircles us—ahead and behind—gently leading and guiding and blessing. We praise You for Your love and Your faithful presence in our lives.

**All: May Your Spirit move in our hearts and minds as we worship together—examine our attitudes and actions, lay bare the things we need to confess, challenge us with Your Word, and guide us on to paths that lead to life. For we are Your people, called by Your name. Amen.**

 **An Opening Hymn**

“Let All Things Now Living”

**#22**

**A Reading from the Psalms** (from *Psalms for Praying*)

**Psalm 139**

**A Reading from the Psalms** (from NRSVUE translation)

**Psalm 139:19-24**

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**

**A Responsive Psalm**

Pastor: Where can I go, O, God, where can I run, where can I be that I am not within your love?

**All: If I sail on the wings of the wind or make my bed in hell, still there you find me. If I change my appearance like trees through the seasons, still you see my roots.**

Leader: No matter how dark I let my heart become, no matter what doubts and questions I wrestle with in the night,

**All: Still there you are – still loving me.**

Pastor: I beat at the air with my fists; I curse the rain as it falls on my tear-clinched eyes.

**All: Still there you are – still loving me.**

Leader: And even when I don’t know how, who, or why...

All: Still... there... you are...  
Still... loving... even me.

Prayer Hymn

“Like A Mighty River Flowing”

#20

(please feel free to remain seated)

**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)*

✠ 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

Music for Reflection and Inspiration

Stephen Page

Sermon

“Seduced by Hate; Rescued by Love”

Rev. Doug Williamson

✠ A Contemporary Psalm Hymn

“God of the Sparrow”

#29

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

Postlude





### **Our Covenant of Welcome**

*We, the members of the First Congregational Church of West Brookfield, UCC, are a people of faith, following Jesus and sharing God's abundant love, believing each of us is created in God's image. We seek to demonstrate God's love through respect and care for one another. We celebrate and learn from differences in race, culture, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, economic and political background, and physical and cognitive challenges. We welcome those who have no church home, need strength, want to follow Christ, or are seekers in their spiritual lives. All are invited to participate fully in the life, leadership, ministry and mission of this church as we strive to grow in a safe and nurturing community of faith. No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.*

**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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| <p><b>Rev. Dr. Doug Williamson – 913-387-9947</b><br/><a href="mailto:djwnscaa@gmail.com">djwnscaa@gmail.com</a><br/><b>P.O. Box 74, Barre, MA 01005</b></p> |
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