

The First Congregational Church of West Brookfield

United Church of Christ



August 9, 2026; 10 a.m.

REFLECT

"The good news is inherently social. It brings us into a new kind of community with one another. It is not the story of souls fleeing to God out of a wicked and transitory world, but a story of individual people discovering that they are loved—and that everyone else is, too. In discovering this, we discover our deep equality and our fundamental relatedness to one another."

—L. William Countryman, in *Good News of Jesus*—

ELEVENTH 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

Opening with Thanksgiving and Praise

Mary Deotte

Leader: Let us give thanks!

All: Our God has bent down and fed us!

Leader: Like a mother, God has held us;

All: Our God has calmed and quieted our fear!

Leader: Like a father, God has forgiven us,

All: And removed our sins from us!

Leader: Bless God's holy name!

All: And forget not all God's benefits!

Leader: Let us give thanks to God for the promise in sharing
meals together: presence to break the bonds of isolation,
power to overcome our powerlessness.

**All: Let us reach out to each other in community; may Christ's
resurrection happen in and through us! Amen.**

 An Opening Hymn

"Great God, as We Are Gathering"

#604

A Litany of Confession and Community

Pastor: Our God is with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray. We dream, O God, of community, but in waking hours we forget such hopes. Dreams we call "alien," our sister and brother we call "stranger."

**All: You call us by name. With arms outstretched as on a cross, you call us to yourself,
and you name us as your own people.**

Leader: So with arms outstretched, we now embrace new friends and forgotten dreams. The body broken and lifeblood poured transform our fears, revive our visions.

**All: Renew us, O God, with your Spirit, that we may receive this mystery of your grace that
unites us, embracing its manifold gifts and needs, shouting an "Amen!" that resounds
through our world. Amen!**

A Reading from Paul's Letters

I Corinthians 11:1-2, 17-33

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

Prayer Hymn

"In Christ There is No East or West"
(please feel free to remain seated)

#600

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

"Where Strangers Become Friends"

Rev. Doug Williamson

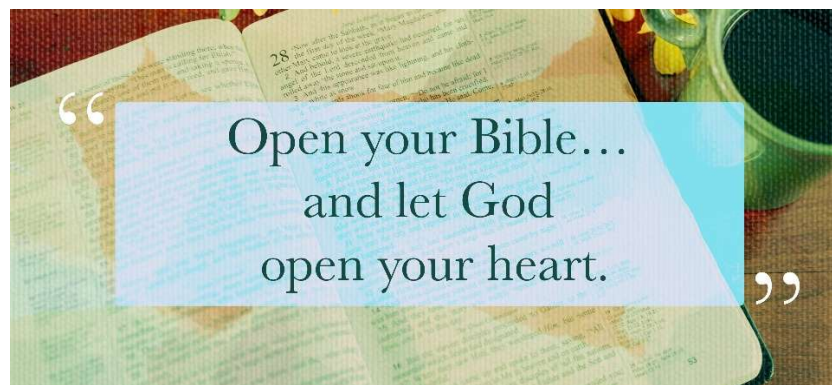
✠ **A Closing Hymn**

"Help Us Accept Each Other"

#596

✠ **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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