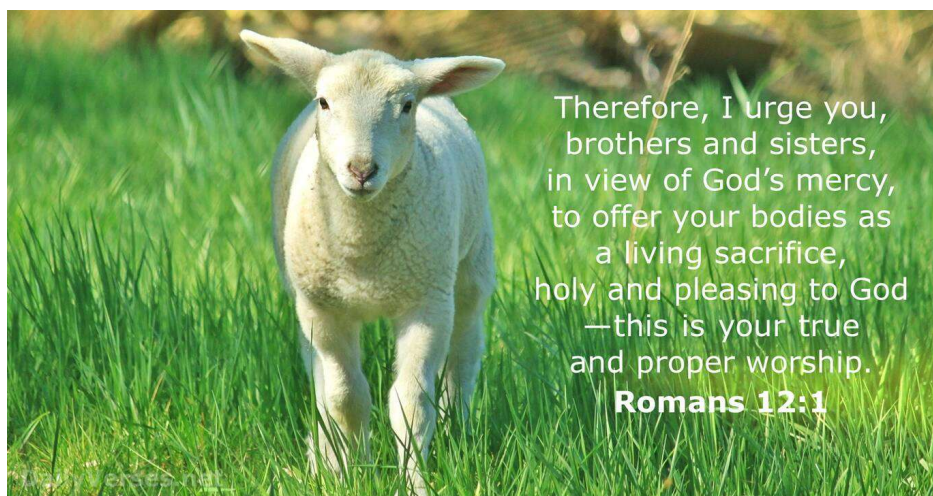


The First Congregational Church of West Brookfield

United Church of Christ



Therefore, I urge you,
brothers and sisters,
in view of God's mercy,
to offer your bodies as
a living sacrifice,
holy and pleasing to God
—this is your true
and proper worship.

Romans 12:1

August 16, 2026; 10 a.m.

REFLECT

“The word became flesh. That is the center of the Christian message. Often the body was seen as a hindrance to the full realization of what the word wanted to express. But Jesus confronts us with the word that can be seen, heard, and touched. The body thus becomes the way to know the word and to enter into relationship with the word. The body of Jesus becomes the way of life.”

-- Fr. Henri J. Nouwen--

THIRTEENTH 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

Calling Together the Body of Christ

Mary Deotte

Leader: I appeal to you, sisters and brothers: remember the mercies of God, and seek God's will.

All: We bring ourselves as living sacrifices, that we may be transformed and our minds renewed.

Leader: Seek here what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Recognize once more the gifts God has given you.

All: We are here to recognize ourselves as one body. In Christ we are empowered to be the church.

 An Opening Hymn

"God of Many Names"

#58

The Epistle

Romans 12:1-8

A Responsive Credo for Christians

Pastor: God is Love, the cosmic creativity present everywhere and in everything,

All: Gently urging all toward the good. To transcending Love, we raise our awestruck praise!

Leader: Jesus embodied the love that is God. He loved the poor, the sick, the outcast,

All: He loved the unpopular, and even his own enemies. He loved so completely, he loved so dangerously, that it cost him his life.

Pastor: As Christians we aim to serve humbly as he did, resurrecting his life of Love through communion with others.

All: The texts and traditions of Christianity give voice to our souls, so that we may support each other in our quests of Love.

Leader: Love is the measure of what is worth following, and what is not, in all religions.

All: So we pray for a Holy Spirit of discernment to express our faith afresh in new times and places. Amen.

A Reading from the Gospel

Matthew 16:21-28

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 *Amazing Grace (alternative text by George Stuart)*

Insert

(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 "Loving the Body, Growing in Spirit" **Rev. Doug Williamson**

 **A Closing Hymn** "O God in Whom All Life Begins" **#388**

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

Postlude

AMAZING GRACE (alternative text)

Tune: New Britain; #422 in our hymnals

**Amazing Grace; it gives us birth,
To each and everyone;
This precious gift of life to live;
This race for us to run.**

**Amazing Grace; it gives us strength
To struggle with our pain;
To rise and stand, to forge ahead
In sunshine and in rain.**

**Amazing Grace; it gives us love
When all seems deep despair;
Compassion shown by friends who weep
Is wealth beyond compare.**

**Amazing Grace is found in life;
In Grace we all are blest;
In Grace we live, in Grace we die;
In Grace we find our rest.**

George Stuart has several self-published volumes of new lyrics to well-known hymn tunes.
Check out his website at sites.google.com/site/george007site or email him at
george.stuart@exemail.com.au



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.

First Congregational Church of West Brookfield

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<https://www.youtube.com/@FirstCongregationalChurchofW.B>

<i>Rev. Dr. Doug Williamson – 913-387-9947</i>
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