



# THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH CANTON CENTER, CT

May 21, 2023 ~ 10:00 a.m.

~ Seventh Sunday of Easter ~

Mental Health Sunday



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~ ORDER OF WORSHIP ~

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*\*Please stand if able.*

***Bold** denotes unison response.*

**CHIMES**

**WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Brief announcements from the congregation are welcome. Those wishing to make an announcement are asked to be in the front pews at the start of the announcement period. **Prayer request cards** may be found on the tables at the back of the church. **Offerings** may be placed in the marked boxes on the tables at the back or front of the church.*

**PRELUDE**    *The King of Love My Shepherd Is*

John Ness Beck

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

God calls us to love our neighbor as ourselves;

**the one who is weak and the one who is strong,**

the one who is happy and the one who is sad,

**the one who is enjoying mental wellness today**

and the one who is struggling with mental illness today,

**the one whom we understand and the one we don't,**

the one who is embraced and the one who is shunned,

**the one who is like us and the one who is different.**

Come, let us worship together!

**We come, trusting God's abundant love!**

**\*HYMN**    *In a Bulb There is a Flower*

Hymnal (blue), 638

*In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree;*

*In cocoons, a hidden promise; butterflies will soon be free!*

*In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be,*

*Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.*

*There's a song in every silence, seeking word and melody;*

*There's a dawn in every darkness, brining hope to you and me.*

*From the past will come the future; what it holds, a mystery,*

*Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.*

*In our end is our beginning; in our time, infinity;*

*In our doubt there is believing; in our life, eternity.*

*In our death, a resurrection; at the last, a victory,*

*Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.*

## \*GATHERING PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

O Holy God, we all live in communities where there are people whose lives are challenged by substance abuse, mental illness, and brain disorders. The families of people living with serious mental health issues often feel overwhelmed and isolated by the many challenges these issues create. Holy One, create in us a tenderness to the needs of all, an openness to everyone's gifts, and a commitment to the struggle for justice. We offer this prayer in the name of the Risen Christ who makes all things new:

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.

## \*SUNG RESPONSE

*Bless God, O My Soul*

The image shows two staves of musical notation for a sung response. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 2/2 time signature. The melody is written on a single line, and the lyrics are placed below the notes. The second staff continues the melody and lyrics. The lyrics are: "Bless God, O my soul! All with - in me bless God's name! Bless God, who was, and is, and shall ev - er be the same!"

ANTHEM *Now and Forevermore*  
Senior Choir

Mary McDonald

MOMENT FOR MISSIONS

Catherine Haugh, Covenant to Care

READING FROM SCRIPTURE Luke 15:1-10 *Pew Bible p. 850* 1 Peter 5:6-11 *Pew Bible p. 986*

SERMON *God's Love Will Not Let Us Go!*

\*HYMN *O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go* Chalice (blue), 540

*O Love that wilt not let me go, I rest my weary soul in thee;  
I give thee back the life I owe, that in thine ocean depths its flow may richer, fuller be.*

*O light that followest all my way, I yield my flickering torch to thee;  
My heart restores its borrowed ray, that in thy sunshine's blaze its day may brighter, fairer be.*

*O Joy that sleekest me through pain, I can not close my heart to thee;  
I trace the rainbow through the rain, and feel the promise is not vain that morn shall tearless be.*

*O Cross that liftest up my head, I dare not ask to fly from thee;  
I lay in dust life's glory dead, and from the ground there blossoms red life that shall endless be.*

## DEDICATION OF OFFERINGS

Because we have been blessed by you, O God, we are delighted to share.  
Because there are many who do not enjoy your bounty, we search for ways to help them. Thank you for showing us the way of mercy and patient example, the way of generosity and self-forgetfulness service, the way of faithfulness and joyous celebration. Bless us and our offering, we pray. Amen

### \*Doxology

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise God, all creatures here below,  
Praise God for all that love has done,  
Creator, Christ and Spirit, One. Amen.*

### \*Prayer of Dedication

## PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

### Joys & Concerns, Pastoral Prayer

\*HYMN *Amazing Grace* Chalice (blue), 546

*Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see.*

*'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved;  
how precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed.*

*Through many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come;  
'tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.*

*When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,  
we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun.*

### \*BENEDICTION

\*BENEDICTION RESPONSE *Amen*

\*POSTLUDE *Songs of Praise, Once Earthbound, Rise*

Philip Young