



**THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
CANTON CENTER, CT**

**September 10, 2023 ~ 10:00 a.m. Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

**Gathering Sunday & Holy Communion**

**In Person & Live Streamed**



**184 Cherry Brook Road, PO Box 133, Canton Center, CT 06020-0133**

**Office 860-693-4581**

**E-mail: [office@cantoncenterchurch.org](mailto:office@cantoncenterchurch.org)**

**[www.cantoncenterchurch.org](http://www.cantoncenterchurch.org)**

# ORDER OF WORSHIP

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*\*All who are able, please stand. **Bold** denotes unison voice.*

## CHIMES

Karen Needham

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

***Brief announcements** from the congregation are welcome, please be in the front pews at the start of the announcements period. **Offerings and prayer request** on the yellow prayer request cards found in the pews may be placed in the offering plate at the time of the offering or in the designated boxes on the back table.*

## PRELUDE

*Like An Eagle*

Carl Stromann

## CALL TO WORSHIP

Let us worship God, the source of all kindness.

Let us come before Him with hearts full of gratitude for His many blessings.

**We are grateful for your kindness, O God! You have shown us kindness in so many ways, big and small. We confess that we are not always kind, but we ask for Your help to be more like You.**

Let us open our hearts so God may fill us with His Spirit of kindness.

**Let us worship God in word, in song, and in prayer, with all our hearts and souls.**

## \*HYMN

*We Gather Together*

Chalice (blue), 276

***We Gather together to ask for God's blessing,  
To turn to a wisdom surpassing our own;  
The pow'rs that oppress us now cease to distress us.  
O God, be present with us, and make your will known.***

***Beside us to guide us, O God, we perceive you  
Ordaining, maintaining the power of life.  
Yes, yours be the glory; let all tell the story.  
Our God, be ever with us, in gladness and strife.***

*May all sing your praises, Redeemer triumphant,  
Defend us, befriend us, whatever may be.  
May your congregation escape tribulation.  
Your name be praised forever, O God, make us free!*

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

Gracious God, we gather today in Your name. We come before You in awe and wonder. We thank you for the gift of life, for the beauty of the world, and for the love that binds us together. We come with hearts full of praise and thanksgiving. We thank You for Your love, Your grace, and Your mercy. May the presence of the Spirit be felt in our hearts during this time of worship. Fill us with Your peace and help us to focus on You and Your word. May our hearts be open to Your Spirit, and may we be transformed by Your love.

**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 in G major (one sharp) and 2/2 time. The first staff contains the melody and accompaniment for the first line of the response: "Bless God, O my soul! All with - in me bless God's name!". The second staff continues the melody and accompaniment for the second line: "Bless God, who was, and is, and shall ev - er be the same!". The music is written in a simple, accessible style suitable for congregational singing.

## DEDICATION OF OFFERINGS

We now offer our gifts to You, Lord, with grateful, cheerful hearts.  
We joyfully give back a portion of the gifts we have received  
and ask Your blessing on them. May they be used to serve others  
bringing honor to Your Name. Amen.

**\*OFFERTORY**      *Bread of the World*      Bernadette Farrell  
Senior Choir

**\*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**

## READINGS FROM SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 4:17-32    Pew Bible, p. 950      Hebrews 13:1-3    Pew Bible, p. 979

**SERMON**      *Kindness: A Test of Our Faith*

## PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

### **Joys & Concerns, Pastoral Prayer**

**\*HYMN**      *Breathe on Me, Breath of God*      Pilgrim (red), 233

*Breathe on me, Breath of God, Fill me with life anew,  
That I may love what thou dost love, And do what thou wouldst do.*

*Breathe on me, Breath of God, Until my heart is pure,  
Until with thee I will one will To do and to endure.*

*Breathe on me, Breath of God, Till I am wholly thine,  
Until this earthly part of me Glows with thy fire divine.*

*Breathe on me, Breath of God, So shall I never die;  
But live with thee the perfect life Of thine eternity. Amen*

## **THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

*This church practices open Communion; all are welcome to participate, including children, at the discretion of their parents. As the elements are passed, please wait until all have been served and all will partake together. The bread in the small paper cup is gluten-free. The cups contain non-alcoholic grape juice. The cup in the center of the tray contains water, for anyone unable to have the grape juice.*

### **Invitation**

### **Prayer of Preparation**

**We come to You today with a humble heart confessing our transgressions to receive Your blessing of Holy Communion. Help us to receive You in faith and love, so that we may be transformed by Your presence. Make each of us one with You to live a life of love and service to others.**

### **The Words of Institution & Partaking of the Elements**

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

**As your light shines upon us, God of grace,  
as your Spirit leads us on our journeys,  
we give thanks that we are called into  
the community of Christ, to be followers of his way.  
Now send us out to be bread for each other  
and light for the world, in hope and in peace,  
in joy and in love. Amen.**

## **INTERGENERATIONAL ACTIVITY**

### **\*BENEDICTION**

### **\*BENEDICTION RESPONSE**

*Sevenfold Amen*  
Senior Choir

### **\*POSTLUDE**    *When In Our Music God Is Glorified*

Don McAfee

## WELCOME

We're glad you've joined us for worship today. Please know that whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here! If you are visiting today, please help us get to know you better by filling out one of the visitor cards in the pews and placing it in the offering plate. Questions? Please feel free to ask the pastor, or call the church office during the week.

*The flowers this morning are given by Ruth Morholt  
in loving memory of her husband Jim.*

## PIZZA LUNCHEON ~ TODAY

Join us for a pizza luncheon after the service to celebrate our Gathering Sunday.  
We hope you will join us!

## CHURCH SCHOOL

We welcome you back to the program year and first Sunday of Church School this morning. We will celebrate with a pizza luncheon following our intergenerational service, activities for the children, and an open schoolhouse with opportunities for pulling the rope to ring the bell.

**Children will start in Church School in the schoolhouse at 10:00 am**  
and will be led back into the sanctuary to share communion with their families.

**Interim Pastor:** Rev. Kurt Satherlie

**Ministers:** Every Member

**Dir. of Faith Formation:** Dr. Hollace Bristol

**Asst. Dir. of Faith Formation:** Karen Needham

**Director of Music:** Mary Lou Keefe

**Sexton:** Walt LeGeyt

**Office Manager:** Kristen DiMattia

**Camera:** Hugh Anderson

**Duty Trustees:** Phil LeGeyt & Art Dewey

**Duty Deacons:** Kristin Oswald & Tim Lundgren

Sunday 10	Monday 11	Tuesday 12	Wednesday 13	Thursday 14	Friday 15	Saturday 16
<b>Worship &amp; Communion 10 am Pizza Luncheon</b>	<b>Choir 5 pm Trustees 7 pm ACA/AIA. 7 pm</b>	<b>Council 6 pm AA 7 pm</b>		<b>Bell Choir 5:30 pm</b>		AA 11 pm

**OUR MISSION STATEMENT**

*We gather as a welcoming community in worship, learning, service and fellowship to embody Christ's message of love, compassion and justice.*

*Joining faith with action, both within and beyond our church, we strive to build a community that serves all.*

*An Open and Affirming Congregation*