United Church of Christ, Congregational Boxborough

723 Massachusetts Ave., Boxborough, MA 01719
978-263-7387
https://www.boxboroughucc.org

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you BELONG here.

October 4, 2026 9:30 a.m.

Prelude	*Sanctuary Reflections*	Thygerson
Welcome & Announcements		Pastor Fran Graveson
Introit	*Welcome*	Miller
Call to Worship		Lay Leader

One: Come, all who carry the weight of fear and uncertainty,
All: for the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable.
One: Come, you who have felt forgotten, rejected, or outside the fold,
All: for God's mercy is wide, welcoming, and endlessly deep.
One: May our hearts be opened to the mystery of God's grace,
All: and may our lives trust in the possibilities beyond our knowing.[i]

* Hymn #332 (NCH Black hymnal) *We Gather at Your Table* Daw

As we gather at your table, as we listen to your word,
Help us know, O God, your presence; let our hearts and minds be stirred.
Nourish us with sacred story till we claim it as our own;
Teach us through this holy banquet how to make Love's victory known.

Turn our worship into witness in the sacrament of life;
Send us forth to love and serve you, bringing peace where there is strife.
Give us, Christ, your great compassion to forgive as you forgave;
May we still behold your image in the world you died to save.

Gracious Spirit, help us summon other guests to share that feast
Where triumphant Love will welcome those who had been last and least.
There no more will envy bind us nor will our pride our peace destroy,
As we join with saints and angels to repeat the sounding joy.

Prayer of Transformation Lay Reader

Ever-present God, you are with us when the walls seem to be coming in on us. You are with us when we are searching for freedom, freedom from fear, isolation, and injustice. We do not always rely on your presence. Let us be still in the moment and see the path you are offering to freedom.

<moment of silence>

Prayer of Assurance

We are loved. God is always offering us rebirth. God is always with us to lead us out of the darkness with a path that may seem impossible. Stand firm, be still, and allow God to reveal the path forward. Amen.

* Passing of the Peace

One: We take this time in community to share God's peace from one heart to another. The peace of God be with you.

All: And also, with you.

* Song of Celebration *Spirit of the Living God*

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me;
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Story for All Ages Pastor Fran Graveson

Scripture Reading Lay Leader

Exodus 14:5-7; 10-14; 21-29

When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the minds of Pharaoh and his officials were changed toward the people, and they said, "What have we done, letting Israel leave our service?" So he had his chariot made ready and took his army with him; he took six hundred elite chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them.

As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked back, and there were the Egyptians advancing on them. In great fear the Israelites cried out to the Lord. They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, 'Let us alone so that we can serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." But Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the Lord will accomplish for you today, for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to keep still."

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and turned the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided. The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. The Egyptians pursued and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. At the morning watch, the Lord, in the pillar of fire and cloud, looked down on the Egyptian army and threw the Egyptian army into a panic. He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt."
Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers." So, Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

Anthem *Oceans* Houston, Crocker, Ligthelm

Sermon Pastor Fran Graveson

Prayers of the People, Pastoral Prayer, and Jesus' Prayer

Creator God, 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.

Offering

Invitation to Generosity

Offertory *For This We Pray* Birchwood

*Sung Response

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.

*Dedication of the Offering

Loving God, you do not demand sacrifice or give us extra credit for our offerings. We present these gifts as a grateful response to your grace and a commitment to

lives reflecting and spreading your transformative love. Bless them, to make the impossible possible in our eyes. Amen.

* Hymn #451 (NCH Black hymnal) *Be Now My Vision* Murray

Be now my vision, O God of my heart;
Nothing surpasses the love you impart—
You my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, your presence my light.

Be now my wisdom, and be my true word;
Ever within me, my soul is assured;
Mother and Father, you are both to me,
Now and forever your child I will be;

Riches I need not, nor life's empty praise,
You, my inheritance, now and always;
You and you only are first in my heart,
Great God, my treasure, may we never part.

Communion Pastor Fran Graveson

Prayer of Thanksgiving
All: We thank you, generous God, for the nourishment of this table and our time sharing in community. May they sustain us in our work together, living in the light and walking the path of love's truth. Amen.

Benediction

Choral Benediction Old Irish Blessing Traditional Irish Folk

Postlude *Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven* Hughes

****

***Denotes times in the service when the congregation will stand in body or spirit.**

[i] George Helton, https://thepastorsworkshop.com/liturgy/come-all-who-carry-the-weight-of-fear