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.

March 8, 2026 9:30 a.m.
An Invitation Back to Community

Prelude *Day by Day* *Paxton*

Welcome & Announcements Pastor Fran Graveson

Introit *Make Me A Channel of Your Peace* Senior Choir
Temple

Call to Worship Lay Leader

One: This is Lent. Into the wilderness God calls us.
All: We follow our path through Lent grounded in the truth of our lives.
One: This is Lent. We take this time to stop and reflect on our relationship with God.
All: We follow our path through Lent open to the possibilities of eternal love.
One: This is Lent—a time to follow Jesus' journey, reflect on God's presence in our world, and align ourselves with the unfolding kin_dom.
All: We follow our path through Lent grounded in our humanity and the richness of the soil in which we are planted. Through our reflection, reconciliation, and community, may we grow closer to the One who loves us dearly. Amen.

* Hymn #560 (NCH Black hymnal) *By Whatever Name We Call You* Carlson

By whatever name we call you Fashioner of spheres,
You are grander, so much wiser than our minds perceive.
Labels limit understanding, God, you have no peers.
So, we question—changing, growing—wanting to believe.

In whatever way we worship, Mystery divine,
You are only dimly known through ritual and creed.
Though we try to capture you in symbol or in sign,
Only as we let you be can longing hearts to freed.

In whatever gifts we offer, All inclusive One,

You accept your own creation, fragments we return,
Not as owners but as stewards is our giving done.
In true wonder we receive the love we cannot earn.

Prayer of Lent

Lord in my greatest fear: Let in your peace.
Lord in my darkest shame: Let in your grace.
Lord in my oldest grudge: Let in your forgiveness.
Lord in my deepest anger: Let in your love.
Lord in my loneliest moment: Let in your presence.
Lord in my truest self – my all: Let in your fullness.

-- *Silent meditation –*

Assurance of Pardon

You are loved. Know that on this journey the source of all love walks with you. Let us travel deeply into God's loving arms, strengthen our faith as we turn from the promises of those who deny the mortality of this world and turn to God's eternity of love, justice, and peace.

* 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.

A Word for All Ages Pastor Fran Graveson

Scripture Reading Lay Leader

John 9:1-12 The Message

Walking down the street, Jesus saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked, "Rabbi, who sinned: this man or his parents, causing him to be born blind?"

Jesus said, "You're asking the wrong question. You're looking for someone to blame. There is no such cause-effect here. Look instead for what God can do. We need to be energetically at work for the One who sent me here, working while the sun shines. When night falls, the workday is over. For as long as I am in the world, there is plenty of light. I am the light of the world."

He said this and then spit in the dust, made a clay paste with the saliva, rubbed the paste on the blind man's eyes, and said, "Go, wash at the Pool of Siloam" (Siloam means "Sent"). The man went and washed—and saw.
Soon the town was buzzing. His relatives and those who year after year had seen him as a blind man begging were saying, "Why, isn't this the man we knew, who sat here and begged?"
Others said, "It's him all right!" But others objected, "It's not the same man at all. It just looks like him."
He said, "It's me, the very one."
They said, "How did your eyes get opened?"
"A man named Jesus made a paste and rubbed it on my eyes and told me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' I did what he said. When I washed, I saw."
"So where is he?"
"I don't know."

Anthem *In the Bleak Midwinter* Senior Choir
Christopher

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 *The Love of God* Lehman

* 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

Holy One, accept our offering of time, talent, and treasure. We give in thanks, grateful for our lives; your grace; and this Beloved community. May these gifts be used to spread justice, love, and peace to all.

*Hymn #584 (NCH Black hymnal) *I Am the Light of the World* Strathdee

Refrain
"I am the light of the world! You people come and follow me!"
If you follow and love you'll learn the mystery of what you were meant to do and be.

When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone.
When the sages and the shepherds have found their way home,
The work of Christmas is begun.
Refrain

To find the lost and lonely one, to heal the broken soul with love.
To feed the hungry children with warmth and good food,
To feel the earth below, the sky above.
Refrain

To free the prisoner from all chains, to make the powerful care,
To rebuild the nations with strength of good will,
To see all God's children everywhere.
Refrain

To bring hope to every task you do, to dance at a baby's new birth.
To make music in an old person's heart,
And sing to the colors of the earth!
Refrain

Benediction

Choral Benediction *Aaron's Blessing* Senior Choir
Ortega

Postlude *O Word of God Incarnate* Hegarty

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