United Church of Christ,
Congregational Boxborough

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

March 1, 2026 9:30 a.m.
The Good Shepherd

Prelude *Kyrie Fugue* Couperin

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

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 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 9:38 to 10:1-18 NRSVUE <edited>

He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him. Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind." Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.

"Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes

ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.
So again, Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.
"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me, just as the Mother knows me, and I know the Mother. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So, there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason, the Mother loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Mother."

Anthem *The Lord Is My Shepherd* Senior Choir
Scottish Psalter

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 *Meditation* Dupre

* 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 #331 (NCH Black hymnal) *Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life* Herbert

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life;
Such a way as gives us breath; Such a truth as ends all strife;
Such a life as conquers death.

Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength;
such a light as shows a feast; Such a feast as mend in length
Such a strength as makes a guest.

Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart;
Such a joy as none can move; Such a love as none can part;
Such a heart as joys in love.

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 *Aaron's Blessing* Senior Chorus
Ortega

Postlude *If Thou But Suffer God To Guide Thee* Manz

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