

**The First Church of Christ in Marblehead
Old North Church, United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming Congregation**

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

March 23, 2025

Third Sunday in Lent

10:00am

GATHERING

PRELUDE

Maria vanKalken, *organ*

WELCOME AND CONCERNS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Rev. Lindsay Popperson

(Psalm 85:7-11, translated by Pamela Greenberg)

One: Show us, God, your kindness,
and your salvation—give us your help.

**All: I will listen to your will,
Foundation of my strength.**

One: For you speak peace to your people
and will not let the faithful engage in futility.

**All: Rather your uplift is close
to those who hold you in awe—
glory will once again dwell in our land.**

One: Kindness and truth will meet each other—
justice and tranquility kiss.

**All: Truth will sprout up from the earth,
love for humanity look down from the sky.**

* HYMN

Send Down Your Truth, O God

#232

CENTERING

PRAYER OF INVOCATION (Unison)

Gentle shepherd, you lead us to lush green pastures
and slake our thirst in clear waters.

We, like sheep, have lost our way:
be with us.

Call out to us over the noise of the world.

Walk with us even through the valley of the shadow of death.

You are our shepherd, here with us, now and always,
so hear us as we pray the words Jesus taught us:

THE LORD'S PRAYER (Unison)

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 and ever. Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Unison)

Loving God, you are always speaking, giving us instructions, directing our attention, and telling us your love. We confess that sometimes we are not very good listeners. We aren't sure what is your voice, and what is ours, and what is just noise. We are easily distracted. We like our own ways. But even when we are too busy, you still call. We admit that we find you difficult to hear, and we ask for your help. Open our minds and hearts. Tune our ears to your voice. Help us to listen to what you have to say, and then help us to follow wherever you lead.

(silence)

Thank you, God, for hearing us, and for speaking to us. Remind us of your love and forgiveness, and give us strength to be faithful to you. Amen

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One: There is no where we can go where we are out of God's presence.

All: There is nothing we can do that can separate us from God's love.

One: God is a gentle shepherd, who knows our foolish tendencies, and always welcomes us back into the fold.

All: We are forgiven, and we find our home in God's love. Thanks be to God! Amen.

* CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (please join in singing)

**Glory to the Creator, and to the Christ, and to the Spirit One,
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
World without end, Amen, Amen.**

MOMENTS WITH CHILDREN

Kenna Bartholomew

May you know that you belong here and can always come home.

May you grow, learn, and question.

May you feel the love of God wherever you go.

Children will now go to Sunday school; families can meet them in the classroom after the service.

LISTENING**GOSPEL READING**

John 10:1-14

Read by Bonnie MacDonald

“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.

ANTHEM*Sheep May Safely Graze*

J.S. Bach

Senior Choir

SERMON

“Listening to Love”

Rev. Lindsay Popperson

PASTORAL PRAYER**RESPONDING****OFFERTORY****INVITATION****PRESENTATION OF OFFERINGS***Until Love is Spoken*

Karen Marrolli

Senior Choir

*Grant us gentleness in power, grant us strength to face this hour;
to forgive, to offer grace, and nurture peace in every place.*

Grant us hope when all seems dire, grant us faith to spark a fire

*to fiercely burn, to drown the night, and set the world ablaze with light.
And when we meet resistance and our call puts us in danger,
grant us patience and persistence to stand up for friend and stranger.
Grant us courage to be kind. Grant us singleness of mind,
to free the world from hate and fear, so only love is spoken here.*

* DOXOLOGY #45

**Praise God for love we all may share.
Praise God for beauty everywhere.
Praise God for hope of good to be.
Praise God for truth that makes us free, Amen.**

* PRAYER OF DEDICATION

* CHORAL RESPONSE

SENDING

* HYMN *Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken* #81

* BENEDICTION

* RESPONSE (please join in singing) #334, verse 4

**Grant us thy peace throughout our earthly life,
Our balm in sorrow, and our stay in strife;
Then, when thy voice shall bid our conflict cease,
Call us, O Lord, to thine eternal peace. Amen**

POSTLUDE

Maria vanKalken, *organ*