



## First Congregational Church of Walpole, UCC

November 26, 2023, 10:00 a.m.

Reign of Christ Sunday

*Value life in whatever house it dwells. For when it comes time that we are all stripped to bare bones before the divine and facing eternity, we will understand that the only law we were meant to follow, was to love ourselves and each other. Nothing more... nothing less.*

— Carla Jo Masterson

*I cannot do all the good that the world needs. But the world needs all the good that I can do.*

— Jana Stanfield

### PRELUDE

### WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### INTROIT

#### CALL TO WORSHIP (based on Psalm 95)

Leader: Come, let us sing to our God;  
let us make joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

**People: Let us come into God's presence with thanksgiving;  
making joyful noise with songs of praise!**

Leader: Ours is a great God, sovereign above all gods.

**People: In God's hand are the depths of the earth;  
the heights of the mountains also.**

Leader: God created the sea and formed the dry land.

**People: Come, let us worship and bow down,  
let us kneel before our God and Maker!**

Leader: We are the people of God's pasture, and the sheep of God's hand.

**All: Today let's listen to God's voice and live out God's purpose.**

**HYMN\*** NCH #304 *All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name*

**PRAYER OF INVOCATION AND CONFESSION\*** (unison)

Gracious God, by your goodness and love, we have life. Today we gather offering you thanks and praise. We yearn to know your presence among us, as we seek the guidance of your Word. Yet our praise is empty, and our thanks are hollow in memory of our sin. We have offended you by thought, word, and deed. We have left undone righteous work to which you call us. Forgive us, we pray. Renew our hearts and clarify our vision so we may find purpose and joy in your service. Open us to the movements of your Spirit in the silence we offer...

**WORDS OF ASSURANCE\***

**SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST\***

Leader: May the peace of Christ be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

**THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM:** Beckett Robert Graves

**WELCOME:**

Pastor: They were bringing children to Jesus that Jesus might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, Jesus was indignant, and said to them,

People: **"Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the realm of God. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the realm of God like a child shall not enter it"**

Pastor: And Jesus took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.

**LITANY:**

Pastor: Jesus came to John to be baptized by him. But John tried to make him change his mind. "I ought to be baptized by you," John said, "yet you have come to me!"

People: **Jesus said, "Let it be so for now. For in this way, we shall do all that God requires." So, John agreed.**

Pastor: As soon as Jesus was baptized, he came up out of the water. Then heaven was opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove and lighting on him.

People: **Then a voice said from heaven, "This is my own dear Son, with whom I am well pleased."**

Pastor: At another time Jesus said: Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The sacrament of baptism is an outward and visible sign of the grace of God. Inasmuch as the promise of the gospel is not only to us but also to our children, baptism with water and the Holy Spirit is the mark of their acceptance into the care of Christ's church, the sign and seal of their participation in God's forgiveness, and the beginning of their growth into full Christian faith and discipleship.

People: **This is the water of baptism. Out of this water we rise with new life, forgiven of sin and one in Christ, members of Christ's body.**

## **QUESTIONS of the parents and sponsors**

### **Congregational Assent\***

**Pastor:** Do you, who witness and celebrate this sacrament, promise your love, support, and care to Beckett, baptized today, as he lives and grows in Christ?

**People:** **We promise our love, support, and care.**

### **AFFIRMATION of Faith**

**Pastor:** We are not alone, we live in God's world.

**All:** **We believe in God:**  
**who has created and is creating,**  
**who has come in Jesus,**  
**the Word made flesh,**  
**to reconcile and make new,**  
**who works in us and others by the Spirit.**  
**We trust in God.**  
**We are called to be the Church:**  
**to celebrate God's presence,**  
**to love and serve others,**  
**to seek justice and resist evil,**  
**to proclaim Jesus,**  
**crucified and risen,**  
**our judge and our hope.**  
**In life, in death, in life beyond death,**  
**God is with us.**  
**We are not alone. Thanks be to God.**

## **PRAYER of Baptism**

### **Act of Baptism**

## **PRESENTATION**

### **PRAYER for the Baptized**

**Pastor:** We give you thanks, O Holy One, mother and father of all the faithful, for this your child Beckett and for the grace acknowledged here today in water and the Holy Spirit. Embrace us all as sons and daughters in the one household of your love. Grant us grace to receive, nurture, and befriend these new members of the body of Christ.

**All:** **Give to Beckett: strength for life's journey, courage in time of suffering, the joy of faith, the freedom of love, and the hope of new life; through Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray saying...**

**LORD'S PRAYER:** (trespasses)

## **JOYS AND CONCERNS**

## **PASTORAL PRAYER**

## **SUNG AMEN**

**SCRIPTURE LESSONS** Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24; Matthew 25:31-46

## **SCRIPTURE RESPONSE**

Leader: For the Word in Scripture, for the Word among us,  
For the Word within us:

All: **Thanks be to God!**

**SUNG RESPONSE** (2 Times) Psalm 119:105

*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

## **SERMON**

## **CALL TO OFFERING**

## **OFFERTORY**

## **DOXOLOGY\***

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;*

*Praise Christ, the Word in flesh born low;*

*Praise God above, you heavenly host;*

*Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

## **PRAYER OF DEDICATION\*** (unison)

God, all we have was given by you. Bless this portion we return for ministry in your name. Guide us and inspire us to employ these gifts wisely and with compassion. Inspire us to always welcome whomever you guide to our door, so we may shine forth your light in all we do and say. In Christ we pray. Amen.

**HYMN\*** TWC #92 *Crown Him with Many Crowns*

## **BENEDICTION\***

## **BENEDICTION RESPONSE\*** *Go Now in Peace*

*Go now in peace. Never be afraid. God will go with you each hour of every day*

*Go now in faith, steadfast, strong, and true. Know He will guide you in all you do.*

*Go now in love, and show you believe. Reach out to others so all the world can see.*

*God will be there watching from above. Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.*

\* Those who are comfortably able, please stand.

**Pastor:** Reverend Richard Malmberg  
**Ushers and Greeters:** Ann Looney and Jana Sellarole  
**Organist:** Sharon Nelson  
**Lay reader:** Minna Good

**Church Staff:**

**Office Administrator:** Jane Vesper **Treasurer:** Tracey Martin  
**Church Office Hours:** M – F, 9 a.m.-12 noon  
**Telephone:** 603-756-4075  
**Email:** walpolechurch@yahoo.com. **Website:** www.walpolenhucc.org

**Please pray for the following people:**

Bob Rhodes, Dean Prentiss, Bill Sudsbury,  
George Jeffrey, Linda Jeffrey, Chuck Shaw, Linda Smith,  
Mike Delaney, Ann Rogers,  
Stephen Hill, Dave Adams,  
Phil Rogers, Keith Sayers.

Our sister church in Chiredzi, Zimbabwe

**Members living in retirement homes:**

Gina Nason, Becky Hubbard, Carol Lamp

The altar flowers are given today in celebration of Beckett Graves' baptism.

The deacon for the month of November is Linda Wright.

## **Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24**

### **God, the True Shepherd**

<sup>11</sup>For thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will search for my sheep and will sort them out. <sup>12</sup>As shepherds sort out their flocks when they are among scattered sheep,<sup>[a]</sup> so I will sort out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. <sup>13</sup>I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and bring them into their own land, and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. <sup>14</sup>I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. <sup>15</sup>I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord GOD. <sup>16</sup>I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strays, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice.

<sup>20</sup> Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. <sup>21</sup> Because you pushed with flank and shoulder and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, <sup>22</sup> I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged, and I will judge between sheep and sheep.

<sup>23</sup> I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them; he shall feed them and be their shepherd. <sup>24</sup> And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I the LORD have spoken.

## **Matthew 25:31-46**

### **The Judgment of the Nations**

<sup>31</sup> “When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, <sup>33</sup> and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. <sup>34</sup> Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, <sup>35</sup> for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ <sup>37</sup> Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? <sup>39</sup> And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ <sup>40</sup> And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.’ <sup>41</sup> Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You who are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels, <sup>42</sup> for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ <sup>44</sup> Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not take care of you?’ <sup>45</sup> Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ <sup>46</sup> And these will go away into eternal punishment but the righteous into eternal life.”