

THE ULTIMATE AUTHORITY

Sunday September 27, 2026

"The Ultimate Authority"

Rev. Tom Bentley

Welcoming All.
Growing Together.
Following Christ.
centre-church.org



a just
world
for all
ucc.org

CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ

5 Summer Street, Lynnfield, MA 01940

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Tom Bentley

Call to Worship

Linda Ladd

Leader: Come, let us worship God who provides for us.

People: Even though we whine and complain, God hears our cries.

Leader: Lift your voices in praise, for God has come to comfort you.

People: Thanks be to God who forgives and heals our wounded souls.

Leader: Come, celebrate God's steadfast love.

Leader & People: Open our hearts, O Lord, and let us truly listen to your words. AMEN.

Opening Prayer *(in unison)*

Linda Ladd

Gracious Lord, how shall we do your will today?

Will it be in acts of praise, in gifts shared, in prayers lifted? Who will you lead us to serve?

Help us trust you. Help us listen.

Bless this community as we come together in worship.

Encourage us, comfort us, unite us, make our joy complete. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer *(in unison)*

Linda Ladd

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.

Amen.

***Hymn:** *"Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise"*

#1

1 Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes.

Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, your great name we praise.

2 Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
not wanting, not wasting, but ruling in might;
Your justice like mountains high soaring above,
your clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.

3 Your life is life-giving - to both great and small;
in all life you're living, the true life of all;
We blossom and flourish as leaves and as flowers,
then wither and perish - but naught dims your powers.

4 So perfect your glory, so brilliant your light,
your angels adore you, all veiling their sight;
All praise we now render as your angels do:
in awe at the splendor of light hiding you.

Kids@CCC Time

Rev. Tom Bentley

The children can go up to the Kids@CCC room afterwards.

New Testament Reading

Linda Ladd

Philippians 2:1-4 *(The Message)*

If you've gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you care— then do me a favor:

Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends. Don't push your way to the front; don't sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside and help others get ahead. Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.

Call to Offering

Rev. Tom Bentley

Offertory

***Hymn of Praise** (in unison)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise Christ, all creatures here below;

Praise Holy Spirit evermore;

Praise Living God, whom we adore.

Prayer of Dedication

Joys and Concerns

Rev. Tom Bentley

Pastoral Prayer

Anthem

Gospel Reading

Linda Ladd

Matthew 21:23-32 (*New International Version*)

When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?"

Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?"

And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why, then, did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd, for all regard John as a prophet."

So, they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

"What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' He answered, 'I will not,' but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same, and he answered, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go.

Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first."

Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him, and even after you saw it you did not change your minds and believe him.

Message: *"The Ultimate Authority"* Rev. Tom Bentley

***Hymn:** *"Filled with the Spirit's Power"* **#266**

1 Filled with the Spirit's power, all hearts as one,
the infant church confessed Christ's victory won.
O Holy Spirit, in the church today
so less your unifying power display.

2 Now with the mind of Christ set us on fire,
that unity may be our great desire.
Give joy and peace; give faith to know your call,
and readiness in each to work for all.

3 Widen our love, good Spirit, to embrace
in your strong care all those of every race.
Like wind and fire with life among us move,
till we are known as Christ's, and Christians prove.

Benediction Rev. Tom Bentley

Postlude

Our ushers today are Kathi Martin and Jeff Law.

Our Coffee Hour hosts are Laurel and Peter Caputo.

Worship Notes.

Music & Video Licenses: One License with license #A-733437, CCLI License #A-2267261 Size A, CCLI Streaming #CSPL169342 Size A and CVLI License Size A

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An Open and Affirming Church

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www.centre-church.org

Rev. Tom Bentley - Pastor

Douglas W. Hodgkins - Organist / Choir Director

Leah O'Brien - Director of Tower Day School

Ruth Buxton - Faith Formation & Community Engagement Director