



Central Square Congregational Church, UCC

71 Central Square, Bridgewater MA 02324 – (508) 697-6016 – cscucc.org

*“We are a Christian community of people who are reaching out to our neighbors,
at home and abroad, sharing our faith and our resources.”*

**September 13, 2020
10:00 AM**

We are delighted to have you in Worship today!

In our church, no matter who you are or where you are
on life's journey, **you are welcome here!**

Follow us on Facebook:

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Check our Website: cscucc.org



CSCC Staff

Ministers:

All the People!

Pastor:

Rev. Elizabeth Stotts – csccpastor@hotmail.com

Congregational Administrator:

Ellen Atherton – office@cscucc.com

Minister of Music:

Julia Scott Carey – juliascottcarey@gmail.com

Treasurer:

David Sheibley – treasurer@cscucc.com

Sexton:

Rich Sullivan

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Introit

Call to Worship

We gather our spirits in praise.

O God, quiet our souls so we may listen.

We seek within our heart Your call on our lives.

Quiet our minds so we may ponder Your words.

We long to join together in person;

However, we know You are with all of us now.

O God, unite us together as one in worship of You as we join our hearts in prayer...

Opening Prayer

Compassionate-One, Lover-of-Goodness,

Draw near to us.

Surround us with confidence in your good news:

that you love us as parents love their children;

that your mercy is boundless and generous,

that you beckon us always and will wait forever

as we find our way back to you.

Open our hearts to receive your compassion; and then show us how to forgive,

So that we may be vessels of resurrection hope in our troubled world.

In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Scripture Reading:

Psalm 103

¹*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.*

²*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits—*

³*who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases,*

⁴*who redeems your life from the Pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,*

⁵*who satisfies you with good as long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

⁶*The Lord works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed.*

⁷*He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel.*

⁸*The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.*

⁹*He will not always accuse, nor will he keep his anger forever.*

¹⁰*He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.*

¹¹*For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;*

¹²as far as the east is from the west, so far he removes our transgressions from us.

¹³As a father has compassion for his children, so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him.

¹⁴For he knows how we were made; he remembers that we are dust.

¹⁵As for mortals, their days are like grass; they flourish like a flower of the field;

¹⁶for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more.

¹⁷But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children,

¹⁸to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments.

¹⁹The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.

²⁰Bless the Lord, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, obedient to his spoken word.

²¹Bless the Lord, all his hosts, his ministers that do his will.

²²Bless the Lord, all his works, in all places of his dominion. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

Musical Meditation

Gospel Reading: Matthew 18:21-35

Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" ²²Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. ²³"For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves.

²⁴When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; ²⁵and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' ²⁷And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' ²⁹Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' ³⁰But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³²Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.'

Moment for All Ages

Prayer of Confession

Friends, in the scriptures, “Seven” is often seen as a perfect number, a mystical number, a number that points to infinity.

So when Jesus tells his disciples to forgive “seventy times seven”, (or “seventy-seven times” depending on translation), he is inviting people into a never ending, expansive dance of grace.

Confession, repentance, turning one’s life around to a transformed future;
Forgiveness, resilience, opening one’s life to a new moment in relationship:
all this may seem impossible, and yet constantly and consistently, Jesus calls us to profound, ever-evolving change.

Let’s take a few moments to ponder our lives.

Where do we need forgiveness? Where do we need to forgive?

Where do our lives intersect in the wider community
with structures, practices, attitudes that deeply hurt our neighbors?

Where must we seek forgiveness?

Where must we seek to effect change?

How have we been wounded with structures, practices, attitudes
of the wider community that need transformation?

How may we begin to forgive?

...*Silence for confession...*

Assurance of Grace

Holy One, You call us into this ever expanding dance of grace;

Turning “seventy times seven” is not too much when we follow your lead
into a future of hope and peace.

Glory be to the One who, working in us,

can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. **Amen.**

Musical Meditation

Epistle Reading: Romans 14:1-12

Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions.

²Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. ⁴Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand. ⁵Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds.

⁶Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God. ⁷We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. ⁸If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. ¹⁰Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." ¹²So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

Sermon

Prayer

Loving and Forgiving God, sometimes acceptance and forgiveness are hard.
We resist others and we resist forgiveness,
for holding on to our own beliefs or a grudge seems easier.
Help us to remember that You have forgiven us,
and you call us into the hard work of forgiving those who sin against us,
in the ways we still sin against one another.
You call us to welcome those who are different than us.
Help us to hold ourselves accountable, to do right where we can,
and to make the initial steps in seeking relationships.
Help us to know we are not alone and grant us the wisdom
to recognize the people and the resources that can help us in this journey.
In the name of Christ, who forgives us all, we pray. Amen.

Musical Meditation

Benediction

Postlude

*Do you need a meal, a call, spiritual care, or even just a prayer?
Contact the Office, a Deacon, or a member of our Care Team.*

To contact Rev. Beth, call the church office at
508-697-6016 or email her at
csccpastor@hotmail.com.

CSCC Deacons

Deb Sorgman –
debsorgman@gmail.com
Lynn Pietras –lsypie@aol.com



CSCC Care Team

Carol Chaffee
Phoebe Hogg
Bev Mitchell
John Scott
Rev. Beth Stotts

GIFTS, TITHES, AND OFFERINGS

During this time, we encourage you to continue your support of CSCC, to the degree you are able. We know this may be a trying time for you financially as well as emotionally, so please know that we understand if you are not able to meet your usual giving goals. But for those who can, remember the church has ongoing expenses that don't care that everything is shut down. And we are trying to do right by our staff as much as possible, even though our primary income mechanism is unavailable (Sunday offerings).

As illustration, we are \$11,800 behind on pledges and offerings, compared to last year on this date. Offerings can be made in any of the following ways: * Checks can be mailed to the church (71 Central Square, Bridgewater, MA 02324) * Bill-pay through your bank can be set up for one-time or recurring payments * Payments can be made via the Paypal link at the top of our website home page (no Paypal account necessary) (www.cscucc.org, the "For CSCC" donate button) If you have any questions, you can email the Treasurer directly and confidentially at treasurer@cscucc.com.



September Fundraiser

September is a new month, which means NEW FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITY!!

CSCC is excited to announce that we are holding a real-time online auction for one of a kind items that will be shipped right to your door - like this Edelman print pictured above!

Bid on items today using the link below! **This auction ends on Sunday, September 20th at 6:00 PM.** (*Christmas is just around the corner and these would make GREAT gifts!*)

<https://go.americancharityauctions.com/centralsquarechurch>

ALSO: Please share this on Facebook by sharing the church's post, tell your friends and neighbors, and even email it out to your contacts. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHERE PEOPLE LIVE -- this is a national fundraiser as the items will be shipped to whoever wins from the hosting company.