

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

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

September 28, 2025 Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost 10:00am

GATHERING

PRELUDE

Maria vanKalken, *organ*

WELCOME AND CONCERNS

Rev. Christine Hribar

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: God listened to the groanings of the Israelites in slavery.
 God remembered God's covenant with Abraham and Sarah,
 with Isaac and Rebecca.

**All: God saw what was going on.
 God understood.**

One: Today, we worship that same God
 who continues to listen, to remember, to see and to understand.

* HYMN

All Creatures of Our God, Now Sing

#51

CENTERING

PRAYER OF INVOCATION (Unison)

Rev. Christine Hribar

**God, you give us gifts
that enable us to serve you
in all kinds of ways.
Help us not to hold back
but to offer all our gifts to you.
Help us to work together,
complementing one another,
members of one body,
united in our work for you.
Amen.**

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

One: God, you remember your people
in every place and time
even when we fail to remember you.

All: **You meet us here,
those who are here every week and those who show up now and
again; you meet us and welcome us—the people you call your
children.**

One: So God, now that we are here, help us to focus on you,
help us to tear ourselves away from all that distracts us.

All: **Tear us away from those to focus on you.
And as we see you, may we see the love in your eyes:
that look that says—I know you, I love you, I forgive you.**

One: With this knowledge, we silently confess what is on our hearts.

SILENT PRAYER

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One: Through the God of our ancestors, the God of this present moment,
we are forgiven and set free.

All: **Called back to our roots in God, may we be present to the
divine and one another here and now. 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.**

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Ryan Orchard Cheney

Son of Chelsea White Cheney and Greg Cheney

WELCOME BY THE CONGREGATION

One: Let us, the members of the Body of Christ, express our welcome and
affirm our ministry.

All: **We welcome you with joy into the common life of the Church, one
in the unity of Christ. We promise you our prayers and support as
we share the hopes and labors of our faith. By the power of the Holy
Spirit may we continue to grow together in the knowledge and love
of God made manifest in our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.**

LISTENING

MOMENTS WITH CHILDREN

Rev. Christine Hribar

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;
Their caregivers can pick them up in the classroom following the service.*

* HYMN

Come, Living God, When Least Expected

#4

FIRST READING

Exodus 3:4

Read by Mark Roberge

Moses ambled along through the low shrubs and tumbling rocks, following his flock and listening to the mountain winds yawn. Wandering left him plenty of time alone with his thoughts: Who am I? Am I Egyptian? Am I Hebrew? Am I enslaved? Am I an enslaver? Does it even matter? He was a long way from home. This made him feel free but also very much alone and unnamed. Born to a Hebrew mother, raised in the Egyptian palace, hiding out in the country after getting into trouble with both groups, Moses found himself in a lonely and deserted place. As he glanced to his left, Moses noticed something strange in the distance: a lone bush, completely aflame. As he approached, a voice came from the bush, as warm and commanding as the purr of a great lion. “Moses, Moses.” “Here I am,” replied Moses, awestruck.

“I am the God your ancestors knew,” the voice continued. “It’s time we met as well. I’ve heard the groans of my people in Egypt. I see how they suffer. I’ve come to rescue them and lead them back to the Promised Land. And I’m sending you to Pharaoh to bring them there from Egypt.”

Moses sputtered, wide-eyed, “Me? Why would you choose me—of all people—for such a task?” And the mysterious voice seemed to smile as it responded, “I am with you.”

That’s not what I asked, Moses thought. He narrowed his eyes and whispered, “Who are you?” “I am who I am,” came the puzzling reply. “You’ll see what and who I am by how I act.” God’s voice resembled a warm wind, soothing yet adventuresome. “Love you because I am love. I saw you because I am safe. I comfort you because I am comfort. I am with you because I am here.”

“You’re asking me to speak to the people of Israel, but haven’t you noticed that I stutter?” Moses protested. Sometimes his mouth had trouble forming words. Sometimes they felt stuck behind his tongue and all he could do was make noise. “Who do you think made your mouth, Moses? It was me. Whether or not you think it works well, I’ll be with you. I’ll be with your mouth.”

Moses begged God to send someone else. And even though God believed in Moses more than Moses did, God offered to send his brother, Aaron, with him to help him speak. “I’ll be with you, and I’ll be with Aaron. Pharaoh has terrorized my people for far too long. And though he is treated as a god among many gods of Egypt, he is just a man.

A cruel man. A bully. But I am bigger than any bully, and soon everyone will see that. I will show them through many wonders.”

GOSPEL READING John 8:58 Read by Ruth Duell

Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I am.”

ANTHEM *Fairest Lord Jesus* arr. by Martin How

Anne Burgett, *soprano*; Senior Choir

SERMON “Called” Rev. Christine Hribar

PASTORAL PRAYER

RESPONDING

OFFERTORY

INVITATION

PRESENTATION OF OFFERINGS

The Humble Heart arr. by D.Oglesby
Holly Cameron, *soprano*; Senior Choir

* DOXOLOGY #48

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 *Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing* #333

* 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*