

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

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

August 9, 2026 Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost 8am and 10am

GATHERING

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

Rev. Lindsay Popperson

adapted from Isaiah 43:18-21

One: The Prophet Isaiah tells us to look beyond former things

All: Because God is about to do something new.

One: Now, it springs forth, can you perceive it?

All: God will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

One: The wild animals know and honor God: the jackals, the ostriches,

All: For God provides water in the wilderness and rivers in the desert,

One: To provide drink to the people God formed.

All: Let us praise God!

CENTERING

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Rev. Lindsay Popperson

The scriptures tell us that we are each created in God's image (Genesis 1:26-27), and that God took on a human body and came to live among us as Jesus (John 1:14). Our human bodies are extraordinary and beautiful, and they are also vulnerable. They break and they heal. In this time of invocation—calling our awareness to God's presence—I also invite us to be aware of our breath, and our bodies. We will take time to breathe; as you inhale, say silently to God, "I am made in your image;" as you exhale, pray silently, "dwell within me."

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: We know that nothing is able to separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ. Let us, therefore, be free to confess the wrong we have done.

All: God of mercy; as we gather to celebrate your gift of love we recall with sorrow the times when we forget you and are divided from one another.

How often our thoughts, our words, and our actions have betrayed the goodness you have shown to us.

Forgive us, merciful God.

Mend what is broken.

Heal the wounded relationships that separate us from you and one another; through Jesus Christ.

One: In the silence, we confess our separation, our division, our brokenness to you.

SILENCE

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One: Let us assure one another with God's good news:

All: While it is true that we have sinned, it is a greater truth that we are forgiven.

One: What was broken becomes whole through the love and community of God. Live into this good news.

LISTENING

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Mark 2:1-12 from the Inclusive Bible

Jesus came back to Capernaum after several days, and word spread that he was home. People began to gather in such great numbers that there was no longer any room for them, even around the door.

While Jesus was delivering God's word to them, some people arrived bringing a paralyzed person. The four who carried the invalid were unable to reach Jesus because of the crowd, so they began to open up the roof directly above Jesus. When they had made a hole, they lowered the mat on which the paralyzed one was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the sufferer, "My child, your sins are forgiven."

Now some of the religious scholars were sitting there asking themselves, "Why does Jesus talk in that way? He commits blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Jesus immediately perceived in his spirit that they reasoned this way among themselves and said to them, “Why do you harbor such thoughts? Which is easier, to say to this paralyzed person, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Stand up, pick up your mat and walk?’ But so you all may know that the Promised One has authority on earth to forgive sins—” Jesus then turned to the paralyzed person—“I tell you, stand up! Pick up your mat and go home.”

The paralyzed person stood up, picked up the mat and walked outside in the sight of everyone. They were awe-struck, and they all gave praise to God and said, “We have never seen anything like this!

POETRY READING

“Paralysis”

Peter Boyle

Laid out flat
in the back of the station wagon my father borrowed
I look up:
the leaves are immense,
green and golden with clear summer light
breaking through –
though I turn only my neck
I can see all of them
along this avenue that has no limits.

What does it matter
that I am only eyes
if I am to be carried
so lightly
under the trees of the world?
From beyond the numbness of my strange body
the wealth of the leaves
falls forever
into my small still watching.

SERMON

“Carried”

Rev. Lindsay Popperson

PASTORAL PRAYER

SENDING

BENEDICTION

Announcements Sunday, August 9, 2026

TODAY

Today's Deacons are: Rebecca Ehrhardt (reading the Scripture) and Mark Roberge (reading the Poem) at 8am and Rebecca Ehrhardt at 10am.

Time to Register Children and Youth for Church Activities—Nursery care, Church School, Youth Group: please register your child(ren) here using the QR code to participate in church activities this academic year!



Church School Open House! (August 19th 4:45-5:30pm?)—If our new classroom gets painted in time, we'll be hosting a Church School Open house where families can come and see the classrooms and meet the teachers before the first day of Church School on September 13th! (Then you can walk right down to Gashouse Beach for the Intergenerational Dinner!)

This Fall we're adding a new classroom to church school. We'll have a nursery for ages 6 months through three, a classroom for 4-6 year olds and a classroom for 7-10 year olds. Drop Rev. Christine a line for more information! (rev.christinehribar@gmail.com)

Intergenerational Dinner: Lawngames and Dinner at Little Harbor Boathouse Wednesday August 19th 5:30-7pm—Join us for games, food and a time to get to know folks of all ages in our church community! We'll have lawn games (but feel free to bring your favorite!) and pizza. You're welcome to bring a side or dessert or just come! RSVPs to Christine (rev.christinehribar@gmail.com) are helpful but not necessary. We hope to see you!

Bibles for Children and Families—Beloved families, this church has a history of giving Bibles to third graders, but the tradition has lapsed in the past handful of years. We'd love to get bibles into the hands of children and families that will actually be read and used. If you'd like to be part of thinking through giving out bibles (be it to 3-5th graders or a sort of Bible Book Fair) let Rev. Christine (rev.christinehribar@gmail.com) know!

Schooner Adventure, August 13— Sail into history aboard Gloucester's flagship vessel, a National Historic Landmark, and an enduring icon of the American fisheries. Speak with Julie Hahnke for more information. (jhanhkne@comcast.net)

Join The Haven Project's 5K Run/Walk!—Lace up your sneakers and hit the trails at Lynn Woods Reservation on Saturday, September 12th to support housing-unstable youth ages 17–24.

Every step you take and every dollar raised will directly benefit The Haven Project's programming—providing essential resources, housing support, and opportunities for young people in need. Whether you're a seasoned runner or just looking to make a difference, this event is the perfect chance to contribute to a brighter future for our community's youth.

After the race, enjoy the festival area with food trucks, local vendors, and family activities. It's a family-friendly, dog-friendly event, so bring the whole crew! You can sign up by using the QR code.



Women's Group— Interested in the Women's Group? Please text Debby with your name and phone number, even if you have already. She will be sending out a group text.

Debby Stockdale: 781-883-5115

Old North Church Helping Victims of the Earthquake in Venezuela— As we continue to pray for the people of Venezuela, our church will be sending \$500 each from our UCC Emergency Fund to All Hands & Hearts and World Central Kitchen, two trusted organizations providing vital relief to those affected by the crisis. Both are highly rated charities with strong records of compassionate, effective service.

We also encourage those who would like to make an individual gift to consider Global Empowerment Mission (info via the QR code), another highly rated organization partnering with local groups to bring aid to communities in need. Thank you for your care for our neighbors around the world.



Summer Lighthouse Services at Chandler Hovey Park— We are happy to continue our annual summer tradition of worshipping together at Chandler Hovey Park. There is something unique and spiritual about gathering in worship where ocean waters meet solid rock and the light shines to guide people safely. As in the past, if it is raining at 8 am, the service will be moved to the Sanctuary. Look for the sandwich board sign at the Devereux Beach entrance: if green, go to the Lighthouse; if red, the service will be held in the Sanctuary.

For those who wish to continue their traditional Church worship, we will also hold worship at 10am in the Sanctuary. We'll follow the same theme and liturgy as our Lighthouse service. We will continue to livestream our 10am worship held in the Sanctuary.

Childcare is offered at the 8am Light service.

If you have never been to the lighthouse service, you might want to give it a try. Bring your own chairs or blankets, dress as you please, bring your furry friend.... just come and immerse yourself in the beauty that God has created. Then stay for coffee and a chat with friends.

As we have done in the past, and in keeping with the church's commitment to sustainability, all service goods used will be carried out and composted. Better yet, bring your own coffee cup to further help preserve this beautiful planet that the Lord has given us.

COMMUNITY LIFE

We want you! – The Community Life Ministry brings our church community together outside of the Sunday morning worship services and we are looking for new members. We meet the first Tuesday of the month at 7 pm for about an hour, September through May, and our aim is to plan an activity or event once a month throughout the church calendar year. We aim for multigenerational connection where possible and have sponsored things such as the chili bakeoff, bowling, author presentations, short family hikes, potluck and coffee hour. Please contact Janet Doyle if you think you might be interested. janet@doylesailsonedesign.com or cell: 781-530-0065

Gestures of Cheer – If you know of anyone, either here at Old North or in the wider Marblehead community, who is going through a difficult time, the Community Life Board would like to reach out with a little plant and a friendly note. Please contact Lynda Hare at hares8carrots@hotmail.com or 781-639-0107 if you know someone who would appreciate a little extra cheer.

The Narthex display for Summer – America’s 250th! “First Church Members in the Revolution” – In honor of America’s birthday, the narthex display through the summer features historical members of the congregation who were heroes in the cause for Independence as well as modern ones who portray them.

North Shore Youth Ministry—Jess Easter has served as the Youth Group Leader for the North Shore Youth Ministries (NSYM), which is a collaboration between four churches (Old North Church, Clifton Lutheran Church, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, and First Church Swampscott) since 2024. She is a recent graduate of BU School of Theology. To get in touch with Jess for more details about youth programs, or if finding a ride to any youth events is ever an issue, please reach out to Jess (jess@thensym.org) as she can make connections between families to make sure our youth have the opportunity to join.

CHURCH OPERATIONS

Accessing Rev. Lindsay’s Calendar – Pastor Lindsay is available to meet with you for pastoral care, to discuss church matters, or simply to get to know you. You may reach Rev. Lindsay at her email address, lindsay@onchurch.org or by phone at 781-631-1244 x102. You can schedule time with her at calendly.com/lindsaypopper.

Accessing Rev. Christine’s Calendar – You can access Rev. Christine’s calendar online as well to schedule time with her: <https://calendly.com/christine-hribar>. Rev. Christine may also be reached at her email address, revchristinehribar@gmail.com or by phone at 781-631-1244 x105.

Church Building Access and Summer Office Hours –The office is open Tuesday-Thursday 9-NOON. If you have an emergency outside of office hours, or need access to the Church Office, please send an email to office@onchurch.org.