

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

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

February 8, 2026

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

10:00am

GATHERING

PRELUDE

Maria vanKalken, *organ*

WELCOME AND CONCERNS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Rev. Christine Hribar

from Psalm 40, translated by Pamela Greenberg

One: God, I have yearned for you,
and you leaned toward me.

All: **You listened to my cry for help.**

One: You lifted me up from a pit of roaring waters,
from the slippery slime of mud.

All: **You raised my legs upon a rock,**
planting my footsteps firm,
placing in my mouth a new song,
a song of praise to our Beholder.

One: Many see and are overcome with wonder.
They put their trust in the Source of Awe.

All: **Happy are those who make God**
their Source of Trust,
who do not turn toward self-praisers,
those seduced by lies.

One: Many things you have accomplished,
my God of Strength.

All: **Your wonders and thoughts—**
they are always available to us.

One: Nothing compares to your presence.
I will proclaim them and I will speak of them—
they are overpowering to recount.

CENTERING

PRAYER OF INVOCATION (Unison)

Rev. Christine Hribar

Abide with us, loving God. Reveal your loving presence among us always. When we are afraid, when we are weary, when we are hurting, stay with us. When we work, and rest, and play, stay with us. Train our hearts and minds to notice you at work in our world, from the rising of the sun to its setting, and all through our long nights. We pray this in the name of the one who taught us to pray:

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

Rev. Christine Hribar

One: We offer confession because what we carry can be heavy: regrets, shame, the burdens of being alive. We confess because God knows us and loves us and setting down our burdens frees us to participate more fully in this world.

All: We confess that we turn from your presence, God. Afraid to acknowledge your closeness. Afraid of what that would call us into. **Help us carry our need to be strong, our need to be whole and independent.**

One: May we be tender and honest with our limitations.

All: We confess how difficult it is to see our capacities at any given moment. May we hold our expectations of ourselves in honesty and grace. May knowing ourselves be a source of freedom.

One: May we remember that you, alone, are God.

All: We confess that we are drawn to so many solutions that do not end in you, so many ideologies that lay our strength and hope in people and not in you God.

SILENCE

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One: Know that you are forgiven and set free, that you bear no burden alone.
All: **May God draw us into relationship and empower us to love.**

* 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.**

LISTENING

MOMENTS WITH CHILDREN

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.

We invite any children interested to now join their teachers in leaving the sanctuary for Sunday School. Their families can meet them in the classroom when the Annual Budget Meeting is over.

* HYMN

I Danced in the Morning

#206

SCRIPTURE LESSON

John 5:1-18

Read by Ruth Duell

After this there was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay many ill, blind, lame, and paralyzed people. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" The ill man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am making my way someone else steps down ahead of me." Jesus said to him, "Stand up, take your mat and walk."

Now that day was a Sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who had been cured, "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your mat." But he answered them, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Take up your mat and walk.' " They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take it up and walk'?" Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had disappeared in the crowd that was there. Later Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you have been made well! Do not sin any more, so that nothing worse happens to you." The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. Therefore the Jews started persecuting Jesus, because he was doing such things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, "My Father is still working, and I also am working." For this reason the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because he was not only breaking the Sabbath but was also calling God his own Father, thereby making himself equal to God.

ANTHEM

Fairest Lord Jesus
Senior Choir

arr. Martin How

SERMON

"Take Your Mat and Walk"

Rev. Christine Hribar

PASTORAL PRAYER

RESPONDING

OFFERTORY

INVITATION

PRESENTATION OF OFFERINGS

Down to the River to Pray
Senior Choir

arr. Mary MacDonald

* DOXOLOGY #45

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 *The Church's One Foundation* #238

* BENEDICTION

* RESPONSE (please join in singing)

Go Forth for God #352, verse 4

Go forth for God, go to the world in joy,
to serve God's people every day and hour,
And serving Christ, our ev'ry gift employ,
rejoicing in the Holy Spirit's power.
Go forth for God, go to the world in joy. Amen

ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING

Call to Order

Opening Prayer

Approval of the Minutes of the 341st Annual Meeting

Proposed Bylaw Change

Prudential Board Report

2026 Pledging

2026 Old North Church Budget

Other Business

Closing Prayer