



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
Church of Hamilton

## Order of Service March 15, 2026

**Prelude:**

**Welcome and Announcements**

**Preparation:**

*“I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them.”  
- Hosea 14:4*

\* **Call to Worship:** Isaiah 44:21b-23

Leader: I have made you, you are my servant; Israel, I will not forget you. I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist.

**People: Return to me, for I have redeemed you.**

Leader: Sing for joy, you heavens, for the Lord has done this; shout aloud, you earth beneath.

**Unison: Burst into song, you mountains, you forests and all your trees, for the Lord has redeemed Jacob, he displays his glory in Israel.**

\* **Hymn:** This Is My Father’s World

\* **Invocation**

\* **Song of Response:** ..... O Come to the Altar

Are you hurting and broken within?  
Overwhelmed by the weight of your sin?  
Jesus is calling  
Have you come to the end of yourself?  
Do you thirst for a drink from the well?  
Jesus is calling

*Refrain*  
*O come to the altar*  
*The Father’s arms are open wide*  
*Forgiveness was bought with*  
*The precious blood of Jesus Christ*

Leave behind your regrets and mistakes  
Come today, there's no reason to wait  
Jesus is calling  
Bring your sorrows and trade them for joy  
From the ashes, a new life is born  
Jesus is calling

*Refrain*  
Oh, what a Savior  
Isn't He wonderful?  
Sing hallelujah, Christ is risen  
Bow down before Him  
For He is Lord of all  
Sing hallelujah, Christ is risen (repeat)

*Refrain*

**Children’s Message** ..... Mary Bigus

- **Song of Praise** ..... He Will Hold Me Fast

**Pastoral Prayer**

**Offertory:** *He's Got the Whole World in His Hands*..... David Rox

\* **Doxology**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow  
Praise Him all creatures here below  
Praise Him above ye heavenly host  
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost  
Amen

**Scripture Reading**

Luke 15:1-7 ..... Sean McDonough  
Luke 15:8-10 ..... Ashley Hopkins  
Luke 15:11-32 ..... Jack Billings

**Sermon:** *“God’s Welcome: The Lost Sons”*..... Oli van Ruth  
Luke 15:1-32

- **Hymn:** Come, Thou, Fount of Every Blessing

- **Call to Prayer and Benediction**

**Postlude**

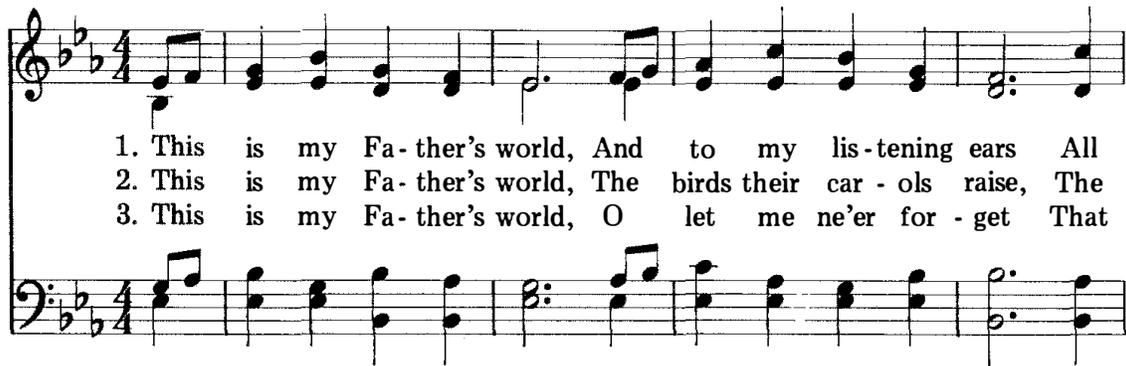
# This Is My Father's World 58

*The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. Job 38:7*

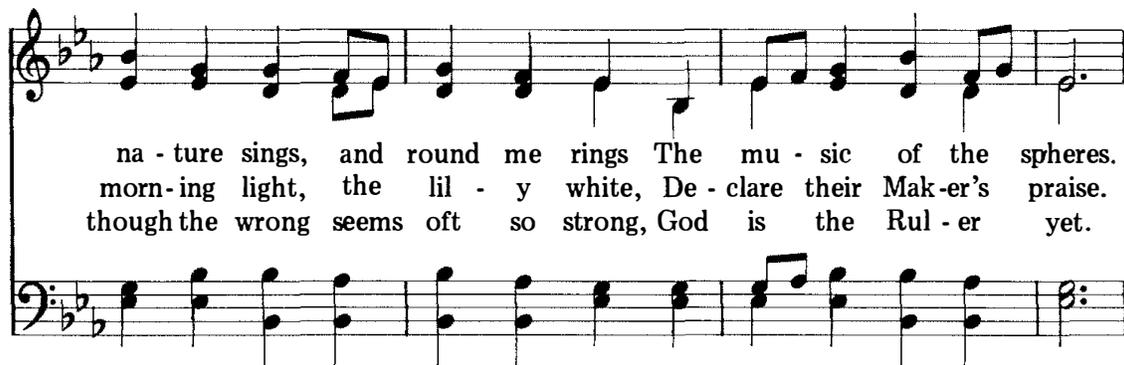
TERRA BEATA S.M.D.

Franklin L. Sheppard, 1915

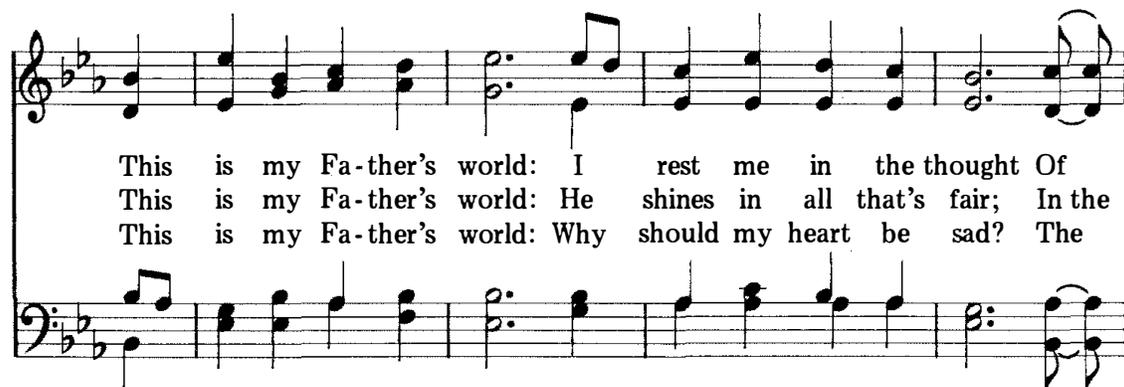
Maltbie D. Babcock, 1901



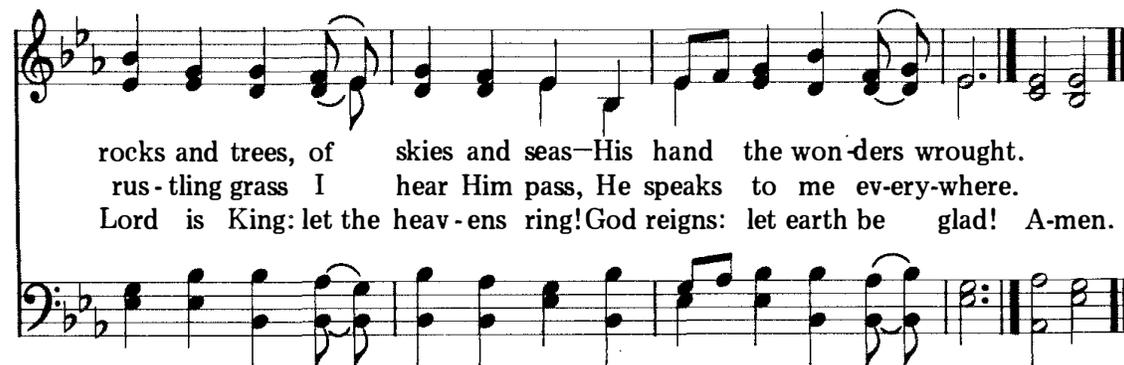
1. This is my Fa-ther's world, And to my lis-tening ears All  
2. This is my Fa-ther's world, The birds their car - ols raise, The  
3. This is my Fa-ther's world, O let me ne'er for - get That



na - ture sings, and round me rings The mu - sic of the spheres.  
morn - ing light, the lil - y white, De - clare their Mak - er's praise.  
though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the Rul - er yet.



This is my Fa-ther's world: I rest me in the thought Of  
This is my Fa-ther's world: He shines in all that's fair; In the  
This is my Fa-ther's world: Why should my heart be sad? The



rocks and trees, of skies and seas—His hand the won - ders wrought.  
rus - tling grass I hear Him pass, He speaks to me ev - er - where.  
Lord is King: let the heav - ens ring! God reigns: let earth be glad! A - men.

*HIS WORKS IN CREATION*

## He Will Hold Me Fast

by Matt Merker

When I fear my faith will fail  
Christ will hold me fast  
When the tempter would prevail  
He will hold me fast

I could never keep my hold  
Through life's fearful path  
For my love is often cold  
He must hold me fast

*Refrain*

*He will hold me fast  
He will hold me fast  
For my Savior loves me so  
He will hold me fast*

Those He saves are His delight  
Christ will hold me fast  
Precious in His holy sight  
He will hold me fast

He'll not let my soul be lost  
His promises shall last  
Bought by Him at such a cost  
He will hold me fast

*Refrain*

For my life He bled and died  
Christ will hold me fast  
Justice has been satisfied  
He will hold me fast

Raised with Him to endless life  
He will hold me fast  
'Til our faith is turned to sight  
When He comes at last!

*Refrain*

# Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing 28

*Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits. Psa. 68:19*

NETTLETON 8 7 8 7 D.

Robert Robinson, 1758  
Adapt. by E. Margaret Clarkson, 1973

Traditional American melody  
John Wyeth's *Repository of Sacred Music*, 1813



1. Come, Thou Fount of ev - ery bless - ing, Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
2. Hith - er - to Thy love has blest me; Thou hast bro't me to this place;
3. O to grace how great a debt - or Dai - ly I'm con - strained to be!



Streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas - ing, Call for songs of loud - est praise.  
And I know Thy hand will bring me Safe - ly home by Thy good grace.  
Let Thy good - ness, like a fet - ter, Bind my wan - dering heart to Thee:



Teach me some me - lo - dious son - net, Sung by flam - ing tongues a - bove;  
Je - sus sought me when a stran - ger, Wan - dering from the fold of God;  
Prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel it, Prone to leave the God I love;



Praise His name—I'm fixed up - on it—Name of God's re - deem - ing love.  
He, to res - cue me from dan - ger, Bought me with His pre - cious blood.  
Here's my heart, O take and seal it; Seal it for Thy courts a - bove. A - men.



## ———— SERMON TEXT & NOTES ————

### Luke 15:1-32

Verses 1-7: **1** Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. **2** But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.” **3** Then Jesus told them this parable: **4** “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? **5** And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders **6** and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ **7** I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

Verses 8-10: **8** “Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn’t she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? **9** And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’ **10** In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Verses 11-32: **11** Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. **12** The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them. **13** “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. **14** After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. **15** So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. **16** He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. **17** “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! **18** I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. **19** I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ **20** So he got up and went to his father. “But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. **21** “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ **22** “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. **23** Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. **24** For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate. **25** “Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. **26** So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. **27** ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’ **28** “The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. **29** But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. **30** But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’ **31** “‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. **32** But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”





FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
Church of Hamilton

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

March 15, 2026

*Our mission is to rejoice in God, grow in the gospel, and point people to Jesus.*

Signup for events



## DATES TO REMEMBER

- March 16 - Pilgrim's Pint, 7:00 pm
- March 17 - Stephen Ministry Training, 6:45 pm
- March 18 - Climate Change Event, 6:30 pm
- March 21 - Family Board Game Night, 5:00 pm
- March 22 - Communion Milestone, 9:45 am
- March 25 - Night of Prayer, 7:00 pm

## HOLY WEEK

- March 29 - Palm Sunday, 8:30 am & 11:00 am
- April 2 - Maundy Thursday, 7:00 pm
- April 3 - Good Friday, 1:00 pm
- April 5 - Easter Sunrise Service, 6:15 am
- April 5 - Easter Worship Service, 10:00 am

## NEW TO OUR CHURCH?

**Welcome!** We are glad you chose to join us this morning! If you have questions please ask an usher.

**For families we provide children's church.** During our 8:30 am service, our supervised Nursery is for infants through age 3, and our Little People's Church (LPC) program is for children age 4 through 1st grade. LPC meets following the Children's Message. During the 11:00 am service, the Nursery room is staffed as a combined space for infants and toddlers.

### Sunday School for all ages at 9:45 am

- Infants, preschool and kindergarten age children gather in the Meetinghouse
- Elementary age children meet in the lower level of the Ministry Center
- Middle schoolers meet in the Ministry Center, Room 11
- High schoolers meet in the Barn
- Adult classes
  - *Becoming a Sanctuary* with Yuka Langlais and Lisa Clay, Meetinghouse Chapel
  - *So Great a Salvation* with Dr. Jack Davis, MC Room 21
  - *Loving God with Head, Heart, and Hands* with Dr. Kerilyn Harkaway-Krieger, MC Room 23/24

**Additional resources:** We have the Deacons fund, prayer chain, helping hands ministry, meals ministry, pastoral counseling, and other resources to help. Contact us at [info@fcchamilton.org](mailto:info@fcchamilton.org).

**Hearing-Assist Devices and Large-Print Bibles:** We have hearing-assist devices that help reduce ambient noise when listening to the sermon in the sanctuary; we also have large-print bibles. Please see an usher for assistance.

Download our app



## NIGHT OF PRAYER

This Lenten season, as we reflect on the work of Jesus that changed our lives, we are thankful for the gift of prayer. Join us for an evening of guided prayer as a church. We encourage children, youth, and adults to come together in the sanctuary on Wednesday, March 25, from 7:00 to 8:00 pm.

## PILGRIM'S PINT PUB THEOLOGY NIGHT

*The Moral Weight of Being: When Life Becomes a Burden Instead of a Gift*

Dr. Karen Mason, Professor of Psychology, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

At nearly 50,000 deaths annually, suicide is one of the leading causes of death for young people in America. Yet buried within the data is a quiet yet clear revelation: those who attend religious services regularly are significantly less likely to attempt or die by suicide. While suffering exists in many forms, Christian theology holds a firm conviction that pain is not without purpose, grief is not final, and life is worth the living. More than a positive thought during difficult times, this 'theology of suffering' is essential to persevering amidst suffering. And in a culture that is hesitant to speak in moral terms, perhaps a stance that values life despite despair could be a moral good for those in suicidal crises. Join us at Post Restaurant (16 Bay Road) on Monday, March 16, as Dr. Karen Mason shares her work on the nature of suicide and urges a cultural reorientation towards the understanding of suffering. Sign up using the QR code above.

## **EASTER CHOIR INVITATION**

Consider joining the Easter Choir this year. It is truly a blessing and a joy to lift our voices together in praise as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord. We strongly encourage your attendance at Thursday rehearsals on March 19 and 26 (7:15 to 8:15 pm), so we can prepare well together. Required rehearsals are April 2 after the Maundy Thursday Service and Saturday, April 4, at 9:00 am.

## **EASTER NURSERY**

As we prepare to celebrate Easter together, we have a wonderful opportunity to serve families in our church. By volunteering in the nursery for children 1 - 3 years during the Easter Sunday service at Gordon Chapel, you help create space for parents of young children to fully participate in worship. We need two adults and four teenagers to serve as caregivers. If you are able, please consider signing up to care for these little ones and bless the families in our church this Easter season.

## **DIAPER DRIVE THIS MARCH**

LifeShare invites you to donate a package of diapers (size 1, 2, or 3) to our Diaper Drive to benefit the parents and babies of Your Options Medical. Collection Sundays: March 22 and March 29. Drop donated diapers in the collection crib found in the Meetinghouse hallway (near the welcome desk).

## **A CALL FOR POETRY**

*"Poetry is when an emotion has found its thought, and the thought has found words."* - Robert Frost

Join us Saturday, April 11, at 7:00 pm in the Meetinghouse Chapel for an evening of sharing poems and the stories behind them. If you're a poet or have a favorite poem you'd like to share, please contact Bill Devitt, [writetobilldevitt@gmail.com](mailto:writetobilldevitt@gmail.com), or Pastor Kevin, [kbaird@fcchamilton.org](mailto:kbaird@fcchamilton.org). We'll have treats to eat, and all are welcome to come and hear the poems and stories of our poets and poetry readers.

## **LIFE AFTER FIFTY (LAF) GETAWAY WEEKEND**

Join the LAF group for a Spring Getaway Weekend from April 24 - 26 at the White Mountain Resort in North Conway, NH. It's an all-inclusive weekend with deluxe accommodations, meals, and activities! Dr. Sean McDonough is our guest speaker. Cost is \$390/person, double-occupancy or \$619/person, single-occupancy. For reservations, call 800-533-6301 and reference "LAF Club." Reservations should be booked by March 24. Contact John Clark with questions at 978-375-6329.

## **CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**

- **Family Board Game Night:** The Children's Ministry is hosting an evening of fun with board games and pizza on Saturday, March 21, from 5:00 to 7:00 pm. Families and individuals of all ages are welcome to this cross-generational evening of playing games! \$15/family suggested donation at the door. Please register using the QR code on the front page, so we know how many to expect for dinner.
- **Communion Milestone:** Parents and caregivers, along with their third-graders, are invited to the fourth Milestone in the Rites of Passage for Lifelong Faith, called "Communion." Join us for a discussion on Sunday, March 22, at 9:45 am in Fellowship Foyer with Pastor Kevin, Pastor Oli and our deacons to explore communion. Together with your child, you'll learn more and prepare for the right time to partake in this sacred ordinance. Use the QR code on the front page to sign up.

## **YOUTH MINISTRY**

- **High School Youth Group** meets Tuesdays from 7:00 to 8:45 pm.
- **Middle School Youth Group** will not meet this week due to the event in Heritage Hall on Wednesday.
  - **Laser Tag Night:** Our middle school students will have youth group at LaserMaxx Danvers on Wednesday, March 25, from 7:00 - 8:30 pm! Cost is \$15. Sign up using the QR code on front page.

## **COLLEGE-AGE MINISTRY**

Our College-Age Group meets on Friday evenings from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at the van Ruths' home in Hamilton. Our next meeting is March 20. This season, we'll discover the compelling, beautiful, counter-cultural manner of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. Use the QR code on the front page to access the college WhatsApp.

## YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

Our Young Adults Group meets on Mondays at 7:00 pm. For more information, contact Pastor Matt at [mschuberth@fcchamilton.org](mailto:mschuberth@fcchamilton.org).

## OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

- **AV Team:** Want to help our church with technology? We're looking for volunteers to help with our Sunday Service sound and livestream. No experience needed—training provided! If interested, contact Jay Foss, Director of Sound and Technology, at [av@fcchamilton.org](mailto:av@fcchamilton.org).
- **Children's Ministry:** We need volunteers to staff our Nursery during the 11:00 am worship service. We also need one adult helper to work alongside the lead teacher during the Preschool Sunday School class. Contact Chrysa Bliati at [cbliati@fcchamilton.org](mailto:cbliati@fcchamilton.org) to help.
- **Easter Yarn Donation Drive:** Women in Transition needs yarn donations for inmates. These incarcerated women give to others through knitting and crocheting, but are running out of yarn. Please drop your leftover/new yarn in one of our bins by Sunday, March 29. Donation bins are in Fellowship Foyer and the Ministry Center hallway.

*If you would like to receive our weekly email, sign up at [fcchamilton.org](http://fcchamilton.org), or the church office, [info@fcchamilton.org](mailto:info@fcchamilton.org).  
If you signed up and are not receiving them, check your spam folder and add [info@fcchamilton.org](mailto:info@fcchamilton.org) to your address book.  
All submissions for the announcements must be received in the church office by Wednesdays at noon. Thank you!*

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## PLACE YOUR ORDER FOR EASTER FLOWERS!

Keeping with tradition, we are asking for your help to bring some Easter beauty to the Gordon College Chapel with Easter lilies, tulips, and daffodils. If you would like to purchase and lend flowers for the chapel on Easter Sunday, please indicate the type of flower, the quantity, and whether you would like to give your flowers in honor or memory of someone. Orders are due TODAY! Remember to pick them up after the Easter Service on Sunday, April 5.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone/Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I wish to lend: Easter Lily (\$18 each) #\_\_\_ Tulip (\$27 each) #\_\_\_ Daffodil (\$26 each) #\_\_\_**

**Given in honor/memory of (circle one):** \_\_\_\_\_

Drop this form and a check (made out to First Congregational Church) in the offering plate or use the QR code to the right.

