



# The Congregational Church of Topsfield

*United Church of Christ | Founded 1663 | An Open and Affirming Congregation*

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[Topsfieldchurch.org](http://Topsfieldchurch.org)

**July 26, 2026**

## **WELCOME**

Welcome to the Congregational Church of Topsfield. Each week we gather for worship as a spiritual practice. We sing, pray, listen, learn, and encourage one another as we seek to follow the way of Jesus. We re-ground ourselves in the story of God's love, gaining strength from community so that we can share that love with the world when we leave.

## **CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TODAY**

Welcome! Children are a valued part of our worshiping community. Whether your family is here every week or visiting for the first time, we hope you'll feel at home. Worship is for all ages, and we're grateful you're here. During the summer, children remain in worship with their families. We do not currently provide nursery care, but infants and toddlers are always welcome in worship.

## **WE WELCOME THE NEW ENGLAND FIDDLE ENSEMBLE**

Today we are delighted to welcome members of the New England Fiddle Ensemble (NEFE), who are leading music during worship.

For 17 seasons, NEFE has lived its mission of "Bringing Community Together Through Music." Musicians from across Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Vermont gather throughout the year in regional rehearsals before coming together as one ensemble for concerts each spring.

Founded by Ellen Carlson with just 15 members, the ensemble has grown to more than 175 musicians of all ages—from children to adults in their 80s—and includes fiddlers, guitarists, banjo players, mandolin players, bassists, and other string musicians. Members come from many different backgrounds and professions, united by a shared love of music, friendship, and collaboration. Learn more about the organization and how to get involved at [nefiddleensemble.org](http://nefiddleensemble.org)

We are grateful to the members of the New England Fiddle Ensemble for sharing your gifts with us today and we also extend our thanks to Janet Ierardi for coordinating NEFE's participation in this morning's worship service.

This morning's selections include "Hector the Hero," played as the theme music for the Ken Burns recent "The American Revolution" which aired on PBS and "Memories of the Sky" composed by Frank Ferrl as his memory of a visit to Scotland (performed by Janet Ierardi, Callie Ierardi Bacho (violins), Peter Bacho, Nora O'Farrell (guitars)).

## ORDER OF WORSHIP

**Prelude** Jam Tunes New England Fiddle Ensemble

**Welcome & Greeting** Rev. Kate Dalton

**Passing of the Peace**

**Musical Response (2x)**

*Gathered here in the mystery of this hour*

*Gathered here in one strong body*

*Gathered here in the struggle and the power*

*Spirit draw near*

**Call to Worship** Lay Leader, Joyce Talbot

One: God's kingdom begins in small and surprising ways.

**All: Like a tiny seed, God plants hope within us.**

One: God's love works quietly, often unseen.

**All: Like yeast in the dough, God's grace transforms our lives.**

One: God's Spirit is at work among us even now.

**All: We come with open hearts to worship the One who is always making all things new.**

**Opening Hymn** "God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens" HOLY MANNA  
Hymnal #150

**Opeening Prayer (Unison)**

Loving God, we thank you for mustard seeds and for the wonder of yeast, and for the ways these simple gifts teach us about your kingdom. Plant your hope within us. Work your love through our hearts. Shape us into people who help your kingdom grow in quiet acts of kindness, justice, and joy. Amen.

**Scripture Reading** 1 Kings 3:5-12 Lay Reader, Joyce Talbot

**Musical Reflection** "Hector the Hero" James Scott Skinner

**Scripture Reading** Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52 Lay Reader, Joyce Talbot

**Sermon** Rev. Kate Dalton

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**Hymn of Response**

“Shall We Gather at the River”

HANSON PLACE

Hymnal # 723

Verses 1, 3, and 4

**Prayers of the People & The Lord's Prayer**

Celebrations and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer - *The pastor leads the congregation in prayer, concluding with the Lord's Prayer in 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.***

***And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.***

***For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.***

**The Offertory**

"Memories of Sky"

Frank Ferrel

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.*

Prayer of Dedication

**Closing Hymn**

“The Lily of the Valley”

SALVATIONIST

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**Benediction**

Rev. Kate Dalton

**Postlude**

A BLAST OF TUNES

New England Fiddle Ensemble

*Join us for Lemonade on the Lawn immediately following the service  
on the front lawn of the Meeting House.*

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## SCRIPTURE READINGS

### **Kings 3:5-12 - New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition**

5 At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, “Ask what I should give you.” 6 And Solomon said, “You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you, and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. 7 And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. 8 And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. 9 Give your servant, therefore, an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil, for who can govern this great people of yours?”

10 It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. 11 God said to him, “Because you have asked this and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or for the life of your enemies but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, 12 I now do according to your word. Indeed, I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you, and no one like you shall arise after you.

## **Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52 - New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition**

31 He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; 32 it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

33 He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with[a] three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”

44 “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and reburied; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

45 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; 46 on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

47 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; 48 when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. 49 So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous 50 and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

51 “Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” 52 And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

THE GRACE OF JESUS CHRIST

2062

# The Lily of the Valley

1. I have found a friend in Je - sus, he's ev - ery-thing to me,  
 2. He all my grief has tak - en, and all my sor-rows borne;  
 3. He will nev - er, nev - er leave me, nor yet for-sake me here,

he's the fair - est of ten thou - sand to my soul;  
 in temp - ta - tion he's my strong and might - y tower;  
 while I live by faith and do his bless - ed will;

the Lil - y of the Val - ley, in him a - lone I see  
 I have all for him for - sak - en, and all my i - dols torn  
 a wall of fire a - bout me, I've noth - ing now to fear,

all I need to cleanse and make me ful - ly whole.  
 from my heart, and now he keeps me by his power.  
 with his man - na he my hun - gry soul shall fill.

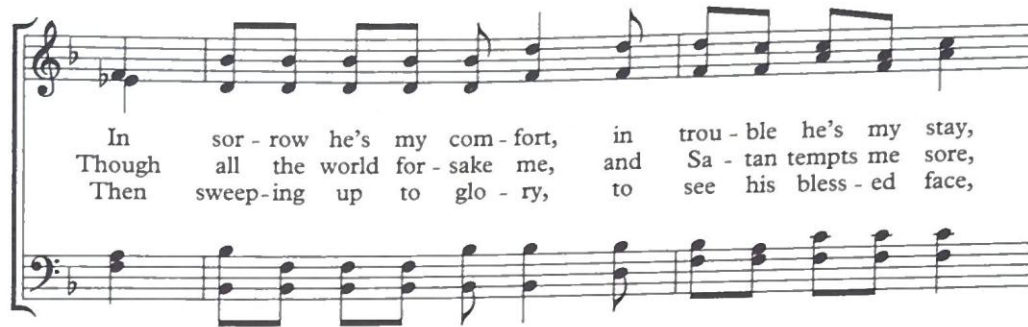
WORDS: Charles W. Fry (Deut. 31:6, 8; Ps. 36:8; Song of Sol. 2:1; 5:10; Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17; Rev. 2:17; 22:16)  
 MUSIC: William S. Hays; adapt. by Charles W. Fry

SALVATIONIST  
Irregular

# THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF TOPSFIELD

July 26, 2026 | Sunday Worship | 9:30am

## IN PRAISE OF CHRIST

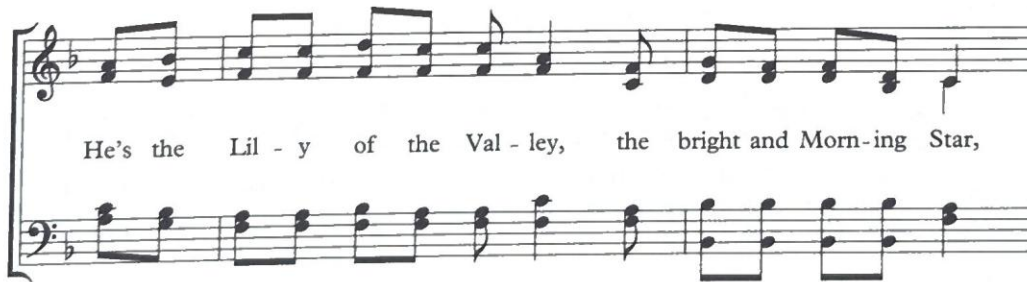


In sor - row he's my com - fort, in trou - ble he's my stay,  
Though all the world for - sake me, and Sa - tan tempts me sore,  
Then sweep - ing up to glo - ry, to see his bless - ed face,

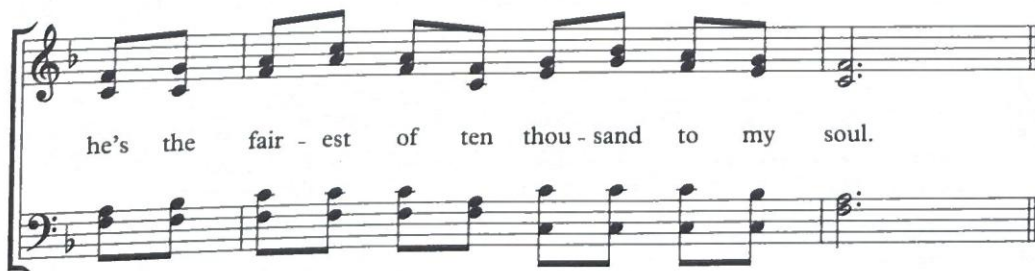


he tells me ev - ery care on him to roll.  
through Je - sus I shall safe - ly reach the goal.  
where riv - ers of de - light shall ev - er roll.

Hal - le - lu - jah!



He's the Lil - y of the Val - ley, the bright and Morn - ing Star,



he's the fair - est of ten thou - sand to my soul.

# Congregational Church of Topsfield

## Parish Care Ministry



### **Prayer Listing Contact:**

Kim Itz at: [prayerlisting@topsfieldchurch.org](mailto:prayerlisting@topsfieldchurch.org)

### **Healing Scripture:**

"And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick ....." Matthew 14:14

### **Healing Prayer:**

Dear Lord, I ask you to turn this weakness into strength, suffering into compassion, sorrow into joy, and pain into comfort for others. May your servants trust in your goodness and hope in your faithfulness, even in the middle of this suffering. Let all be filled with patience and joy in your presence as they wait for your healing touch.

### **Please Pray For:**

Doug McIlvaine - Member of CCOT  
Jane Moyer - Member of CCOT  
Diana Titus - Member of CCOT  
Cheryl Hopkins - Member of CCOT  
Abby Bowling - Member of CCOT  
Susan Gruber - Member of CCOT  
Phyllis Heslet - Member of CCOT  
Marilyn Knowles - Member of CCOT  
Fred Hoover - Member of CCOT  
Jacob Itz - Son of Kim & Charlie Itz  
Katy Fleming - Mother of Kim Itz  
Doug Gruber - Brother of Susan Gruber  
Roger Talbot - Husband of Joyce Talbot  
Chloe - Great-great-niece of Diana Titus  
Kevin Goldenbogen - Former Youth Leader at CCOT  
Maria Cecilia Guerra - Sister of José Guerra  
Eva - Friend of Irina Günzel-Guerra from Norway  
Rick Anderson - Friend of CCOT  
Kay - Family friend of Ellie Losee  
Pete - Friend of Charlotte & Duane Melling  
Nancy Woolford - Friend of CCOT  
Margie & Vince Castellanet - Neighbors of Jane & Bruce Jones

Nancy - Friend of Julie Quinlivan  
Leah Helms - Sister-in-law of Kim Love  
Scott Wilson - Friend of Gary & Judi Gosbee  
Laurie Rowen - Friend of Cathy Imboden,  
Mary Jelinek & Sue Panella  
Eddie Callahan - Friend of Mary & Ed Jelinek  
Peig Fairbrook - Aunt of Nora O'Farrell  
Alejandro Chong - Uncle of Kim Love  
Raul Chong - Uncle of Kim Love  
Luke Maynard - Friend of the Barnes Family  
Jeannette Floto and Family - Friends of Charise Rohm Nulsen

Our prayers of love and sympathy are with Charlie Itz and family as they mourn the loss of Charlie's Mom, Barbara, who passed this week, peacefully at age 98.

Prayers for the communities of Father Benjamin Madu on his recent death.