

First Congregational Church of Pelham

United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Church - Sharing What God's Love Looks Like

October 25, 2026 COMMITMENT SUNDAY Authentic Loving, Authentic Giving

+Please rise in body or spirit.

TOLLING THE HOUR

PRELUDE

WELCOME

INTROIT

"I Was Glad"

Lloyd Larson

"I was glad when they said unto me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.'"

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

CALL TO WORSHIP

We come to you, God of wisdom, looking for answers.

Show us to be obedient, show us the truth.

We praise our creator and teacher, the One who owns all!

Show us how to live a life that reflects your image.

We are ready to empty our busy and sometimes crafty minds.

Show us how to love you and our neighbors here and now.

We follow Jesus' teachings to embody a dynamic discipleship!

Thank you, Holy Spirit, for guiding us! Amen.

+HYMN

"Bring Many Names"

#13 vs 1-3

PRAYER

Loving God, can we ever really understand your great love for us? Can we ever really appreciate how much you desire a relationship with each and every one of us? Gathering for worship gives you praise and glory for who you are and reminds us of whose we are. We enter this time with sincere gratitude for calling us yours, for always being more ready to listen than we are to speak. May this time serve as a reminder of our belovedness and your call on each of our lives to love you, our neighbors, and ourselves. With commitment, we pray. Amen.

A WORD FOR THE AGES

+SINGING PRAISES TO GOD

"Gloria Patri"

#558

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1:26-27 & Matthew 22:15-22, 34-40

The Message

Genesis 1:26-27

God spoke: "Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflecting our nature

So they can be responsible for the fish in the sea,
the birds in the air, the cattle,

And, yes, Earth itself,
and every animal that moves on the face of Earth."

God created human beings;

he created them godlike,

Reflecting God's nature.

He created them male and female.

God blessed them:

Matthew 22:15-22, 34-40

¹⁵⁻¹⁷ That's when the Pharisees plotted a way to trap him into saying something damaging. They sent their disciples, with a few of Herod's followers mixed in, to ask, "Teacher, we know you have integrity, teach the way of God accurately, are indifferent to popular opinion, and don't pander to your students. So tell us honestly: Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

¹⁸⁻¹⁹ Jesus knew they were up to no good. He said, "Why are you playing these games with me? Why are you trying to trap me? Do you have a coin? Let me see it." They handed him a silver piece.

²⁰ "This engraving—who does it look like? And whose name is on it?"

²¹ They said, "Caesar."

"Then give Caesar what is his, and give God what is his."

²² The Pharisees were speechless. They went off shaking their heads.

³⁴⁻³⁶ When the Pharisees heard how he had bested the Sadducees, they gathered their forces for an assault. One of their religion scholars spoke for them, posing a question they hoped would show him up: "Teacher, which command in God's Law is the most important?"

³⁷⁻⁴⁰ Jesus said, "'Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence.' This is the most important, the first on any list. But there is a second to set alongside it: 'Love others as well as you love yourself.' These two commands are pegs; everything in God's Law and the Prophets hangs from them."

ANTHEM

"The Least Of These"

Hank Beebe

*This old man needs a kind word; you help him with a kind word.
You help Me inasmuch as you do it for the least of these.
This widow raises children; you help her clothe her children.
You help Me inasmuch as you do it for the least of these.
I was hungry. Did you feed me? I was lonely. Did you need me?
Did you know then it was indeed Me in the least of these?
This small child is so troubled. You help her be less troubled.
You help Me inasmuch as you do it for the least of these.
When I'm hungry, will you feed Me? When I'm lonely, will you need Me?
Will you know then it is indeed Me in the least of these?
This inmate in a prison: You help him endure his prison.
You help Me inasmuch as you do it for the least of these.*

REFLECTION

+HYMN

"The Gift of Love"

#292

COUNTERCULTURAL WITNESS

Chris Bulkley

PRAYERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

SUNG CALL TO PRAYER

"Spirit Of God, Descend Upon My Heart"

#228 vs 3

SILENCE

PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER (SUNG) #412

OFFERING OUR GIFTS TO GOD

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY



+SUNG RESPONSE

"The Doxology"

#563

venmo

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done; Creator, Christ and Spirit, One. Amen.***

+PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Almighty God, remind us that the gifts we offer were yours to begin with. Help us to be good stewards of all that we have, so that we may better support the work of your kin(g)dom. May our presence in this community reflect your love to all people. In the name of Jesus Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit we pray. Amen.

+HYMN "The Wise May Bring Their Learning" #444

+BENEDICTION

+SUNG BENEDICTION "Freely, Freely" #459

"Go in my name, and, because you believe, others will know that I live."

OCTOBER MISSION -

Through October we will receive the Neighbors in Need (NIN) special mission offering of the United Church of Christ. One-third of our gifts support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM), and two-thirds funds national justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and community grants. Please use the designated offering envelopes or note "NIN" on your donation to support these vital ministries of justice and compassion.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We gather on the traditional ancestral homeland of the Abenaki, Pennacook and Wabanaki Peoples past and present, who have ongoing cultural and spiritual connections.. We acknowledge and honor with gratitude the aki (land), nebi (water), olakwikak (flora), awaasak (fauna) and the aln8bak (people) who have been stewards of these throughout the generations.

Ministers: All Members of the Church

Pastors: Rev. Carlos Jauhola-Straight, Rev. David Wilkerson	Seminarian: Diana Sweeney
Director of Music: Tom Seniow	Accompanist: Carolyn (Sue) Howard
Bell Choir Director: Sharon Hone	Administrator: Stephanie Noel
Deacons: Harmony Campbell, and David Wilkerson	Sexton: Lupe Nava

WEEKLY

Morning Prayer - Monday and Wednesday 7:30 am Zoom ID: contact church office

Bell Choir Rehearsal - 6:30 pm

Knitters - Tuesday 1pm

Lazarus House Food Pantry 8:30 am - 12 noon

Coffeebreak - Wednesday 1pm

Choir Rehearsal - Wednesday 7:30 pm

Sunday, November 1 275th Anniversary kick off Opening of Historical Display	Worship 10am Celebration of Communion Celebrating the Saints Faith Formation & Confirmation 4pm
Monday, November 2	Stewardship 6pm
Tuesday, November 3	Bible Study 10am Faith Formation Meeting 7pm
Thursday, November 5	Book Group 7pm
Sunday, November 8	Worship 10am Celebrating Our Community Partners