

Westhampton Congregational United Church of Christ
an Open and Affirming Congregation
22nd Sunday after Pentecost
October 25, 2026

 **Reflection** *"Knowing the heart of Jesus and loving him are the same thing....The mystery of ministry is that we have been chosen to make our own limited and very conditional love the gateway for the unlimited and unconditional love of God." ~ Henri Nouwen, 20th century*

"Today, more than ever before, life must be characterized by a sense of Universal responsibility, not only nation to nation and human to human, but also human to other forms of life." ~ The Dalai Lama, 21st century

 **Prelude**

 **Announcements / Moment for Stewardship**

 **Introit / Lighting the Candle / Welcome to Worship**

 **Call to Worship**

One: We come here this morning,
carrying the joys and cares of our lives.

Many: We come to rest in the love of God.

One: Jesus reminds us what matters most:
love God with all that we are.

Many: And love our neighbors as ourselves.

One: In our worship, in our giving, and in all the ways
we care for one another, love takes shape.

All: May love be at the heart of all we do.
Let us worship God!

  **Hymn NC #43** *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*

Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven, on earth be found!
Fix in us a humble dwelling; all your faithful mercies crown;
Jesus, you are all compassion; pure, unbounded love impart.
Visit us with your salvation; enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe your loving Spirit into every troubled breast;
Let us all in you inherit, let us find your promised rest;
Take away our love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.

Come, almighty to deliver, let us all your life receive;
Suddenly return, and never, never more your temples leave.
You we would be always blessing, love you as your angels love,
Pray and praise for your unfailing, wounded arms outstretched above.

Finish, then your new creation; pure and spotless may be prove;
Let us see your great salvation, perfectly restored in you;
Changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place,
Crowned as saints, we ever shall be lost in wonder, love, and praise.

  **Unison Prayer of Invocation**

Loving God, you are the heart of all that is good. Gather us in your grace, quiet our worries, and open our hearts to your presence among us this morning. Teach us to love you with all that we are and to love our neighbors as ourselves. May our worship renew our spirits, deepen our faith, and guide us in the ways of love. Be with us now as we join with each other to worship you. Amen.

  **Gloria SL #9**

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, Amen.

 **Anthem** *Heading for the Promised Land*

 **Moment for All Ages**

 **Scripture Reading** Matthew 22:34-46 **p. 30**

 **Message**

  **Hymn** *As a Fire Is Meant For Burning*
(Tune: NC #332 As We Gather at Your Table)

As a fire is meant for burning with a bright and warming flame,
So the church is meant for mission, giving glory to God's name.
Not to preach our creeds or customs, but to build a bridge of care,
We join hands across the nations, finding neighbors everywhere.

We are learners; we are teachers; we are pilgrims on the way.
We are seekers; we are givers; we are vessels made of clay.
By our gentle, loving actions we would show that Christ is light.
In a humble, listening Spirit we would live to God's delight.

As a green bud in the springtime is a sign of life renewed,
So may we be signs of oneness 'mid earth's peoples, many hued.
As a rainbow lights the heavens when a storm is past and gone,
May our lives reflect the radiance of God's new and glorious dawn.



Prayers of the People – Help/Thanks/Wow

One: Now we come to the time where we lift up
our prayers of Help, Thanks, and Wow.
Lift up your hearts.

Many: We lift them up to God.

One: Does anyone have any prayers they would like to lift up?
After each individual prayer request...

One: Loving and beloved God; **Many: Hear our prayer.**

Prayer List

One: Let us read the first names of those on our prayer list.

Prayers of healing and hope for...

JOHN, son of a friend of Kevin and Lorraine O'Keefe

STACEY Jenkins, member of the congregation

CLARE McConville, friend of Robbins/Carriveau family

JACKIE Wagner, mother of Michele Wagner

SUE, cousin of Mikki Nevins

BUDDY Nevins, member of the congregation

WENDY Blow, member of the congregation

JILL Lester, friend of Mikki Nevins

DAVID Horn, brother of Chuck Horn

BOB, great uncle of Brice Willard

CRYSTAL, friend of Jeanie McMahon

**Names remain on prayer list for 8 weeks unless extension requested*

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer using any version you wish



Response: Hear our prayer O Lord, hear our prayer O Lord,
Incline Thine ear to us, and grant us Thy peace.

Offerings of the People – Time, Talents, Treasures, and Testimonies



Offertory



Response SL #40 *We Praise Thee, O God*

We praise Thee, O God, our Redeemer, Creator;
In grateful devotion our tribute we bring.
We lay it before Thee, we kneel and adore Thee.
We bless Thy holy name; glad praises we sing.



Unison Prayer of Dedication

**Loving God, we offer these gifts with grateful hearts.
May they become expressions of our love for you and our
care for our neighbors. Bless what we give and the
ministry we share, that your love may be felt in our
church, our community, and our world. May love be at
the heart of all we do. Amen.**



Hymn NC #454 *Lord, I Want to be a Christian*

Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart, in my heart;
Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart.
In my heart, (*in my heart*), In my heart, (*in my heart*),
Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart.

Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart, in my heart;
Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart.
In my heart, (*in my heart*), In my heart, (*in my heart*),
Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart.

Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart, in my heart.
Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart.
In my heart, (*in my heart*), In my heart, (*in my heart*),
Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart.

Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart, in my heart.
Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart.
In my heart, (*in my heart*), In my heart, (*in my heart*),
Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart.

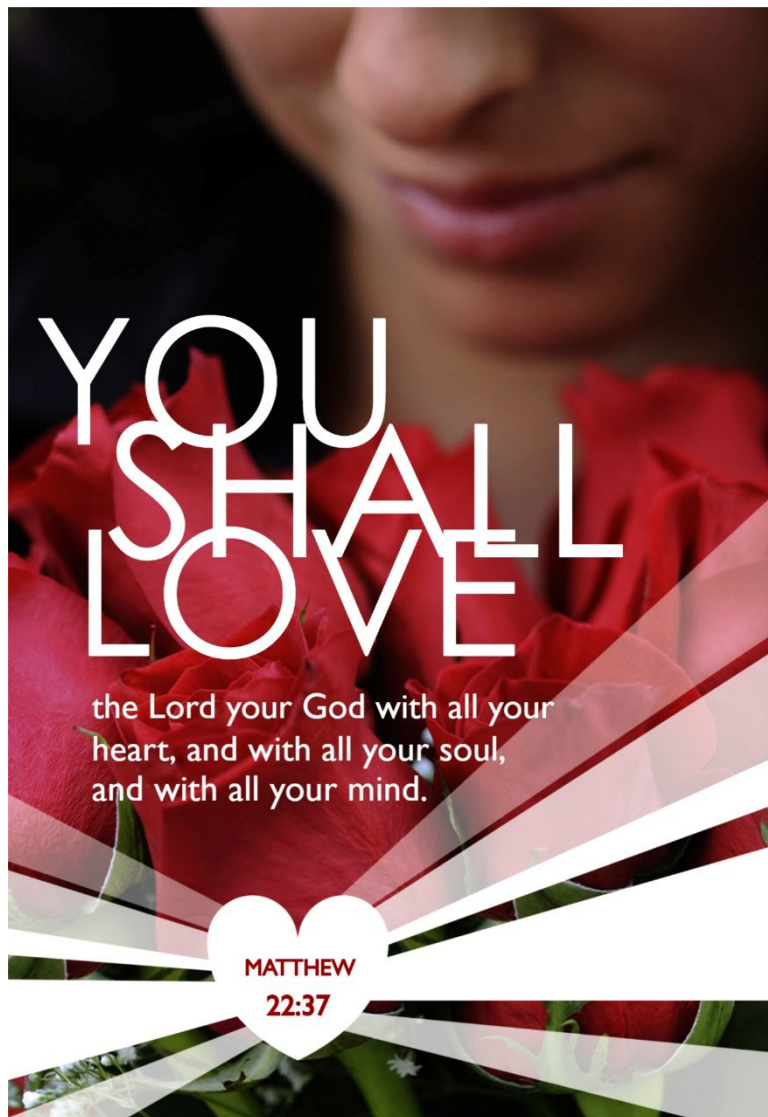
↑ 🙌 **Benediction / Passing of the Peace**

↑ 🎵 **Cong Response SL #785** *God Be With You*

God be with you till we meet again, by his counsels guide, uphold you;
With His sheep securely fold you; God be with you till we meet again.

↑ 🎵 **Postlude**

↑ *Indicates you are invited to stand if you are comfortable doing so.*



Welcome to the Westhampton Congregational United Church of Christ, an open and affirming church. **To join online via Zoom:** Press Ctrl and **CLICK HERE** or visit zoom.us and click Join a Meeting, then enter Meeting ID 321 069 9076; Passcode 248423. To join by phone dial 646-558-8656, then meeting ID and Passcode.

Pastor and Church Contact Info

Rev. Carol Smith's cell phone and email:
860-798-7771; carolbsmith12@gmail.com
Office Hours – Tuesdays/Fridays 9 – 12; pastoral needs any time.
Julie Holt church secretary – church phone and email:
413-527-4204; westhamptonchurchucc@comcast.net

Worship Participants

Ministers -	People of the church
Minister -	Rev. Carol Smith
Greeters -	↑ Maureen Dempsey and Rick Tracy ↓ Patrick McMahon
Lay Reader -	Pat Miller
Pianist -	Michele Feldheim
Zoom Tech-	Bob Miller
Coffee Hour -	Charlotte Wood and Marion Miller
Flowers -	Mikki and Buddy Nevins

This Week at the Church...

Monday 7pm - Council
Wed/Fri/Sat - Food Pantry - see website for hours
Thursday 7pm - Choir
Fri 7pm - AA
Sat 5:30-7:30pm - Trick or Treaters welcomed at the church

Birthdays and Anniversaries...

October 25 ★- Stephen Holt
October 26 ★- Christopher Brooks
October 27 ★- Ilene Lorow
October 29 ★- Kate Johnson
October 30 ★- Tammy Brakey
October 28 -♥- Buddy and Mikki Nevins

October 25, 2026 Matthew 22:34-46 The Compassionate Life

People ask Jesus questions for a variety of reason. Sometimes they want to seek answers or ideas. They want to know more about themselves and their place in Christ's kin-dom. They want to hear Jesus' teachings and stories. And sometimes, they just want to trick Jesus, or trip him up. They want to ask him a question with no answer.

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, an expert in the law, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

After this exchange, Jesus asks a question that those gathered cannot answer, about the nature of humanity and divinity. Question and answer exchanges are part of living and loving. On this Higher Education Sunday, we honor those institutions connected with the United Church of Christ where questions are welcome not as a barrier to faith, but as a sign of it.

There are 48 educational institutions related to the United Church of Christ, including academies, colleges, universities, and seminaries. They span the United States. Each is independent, self-governing, and fully accredited.

Each institution expresses partnership with the church. Closely related schools participate as full members of the UCC Council for Higher Education. Others are historically related, which means they recognize a past relationship with the church but are not full members of the Council.

These institutions provide opportunities to explore moral values, the importance of social responsibility, an ethic of service, and the ability to think critically. Many have campus ministries that are ecumenical and interfaith. Each embodies the UCC ethos where God is Still Speaking (<https://www.ucc.org/about/higher-education/>).