



# First Congregational Church of Rowley

Order of Worship Service  
Sunday, February 13, 2022

**Tune to FM 90.3**

**Welcome and Announcements**

**Rev. Tom Bentley**

**Call to Worship**

**Jen Loring**

Leader: Poor or despairing, come to be blessed.

**People: Hungry or tired, come to be restored.**

Leader: Sorrowing or sighing, come to discover joy.

**People: Bring your tired, your poor.**

Leader: Share your hopes, your dreams.

**People: Embrace your doubts, your fears.**

Leader: Come as you are.

**Leader & People: All are welcome here.**

**Opening Prayer:**

**Jen Loring**

Shepherd of our souls, guide us through times of woe, and help us find your solace and peace. Forgive us in times of sin and sorrow, and lead into your redeeming love. Resurrect us in times of death and despair, and lead into newness of life, that we may be the blessing we seek for everyone we meet. Amen.

**Opening Song "Rain Down" <https://youtu.be/pmOswvlS6CQ>**

**Old Testament Reading Jeremiah 17:5-10 *The Message***

**Jen Loring**

**God's Message:**

"Cursed is the strong one

who depends on mere humans,

Who thinks he can make it on muscle alone

and sets God aside as dead weight.

He's like a tumbleweed on the prairie,

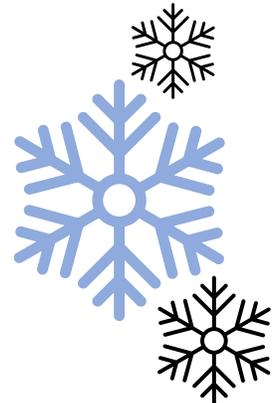
out of touch with the good earth.

He lives rootless and aimless

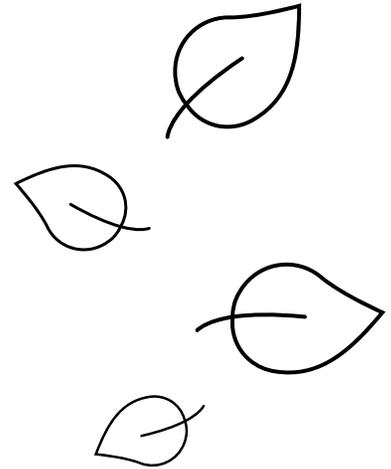
in a land where nothing grows.

"But blessed is the man who trusts me, God,

the woman who sticks with God.



They're like trees replanted in Eden,  
    putting down roots near the rivers—  
Never a worry through the hottest of summers,  
    never dropping a leaf,  
Serene and calm through droughts,  
    bearing fresh fruit every season.  
"The heart is hopelessly dark and deceitful,  
    a puzzle that no one can figure out.  
But I, God, search the heart  
    and examine the mind.  
I get to the heart of the human.  
    I get to the root of things.  
I treat them as they really are,  
    not as they pretend to be."



**Moment of Music: "O Love That Will Not Let Me Go" <https://youtu.be/GVOG15Zj5KM>**

**Joys and Concerns** (*prayer requests can be texted to 978-973-2362*)

### **Pastoral Prayer**

#### **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 sins, as we forgive those who sin 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.**

**Gospel Reading** **Luke 6:17-26** *The Message*

**Jen Loring**

Coming down off the mountain with them, he stood on a plain surrounded by disciples, and was soon joined by a huge congregation from all over Judea and Jerusalem, even from the seaside towns of Tyre and Sidon. They had come both to hear him and to be cured of their ailments. Those disturbed by evil spirits were healed. Everyone was trying to touch him—so much energy surging from him, so many people healed! Then he spoke:

You're blessed when you've lost it all.  
God's kingdom is there for the finding.  
You're blessed when you're ravenously hungry.  
Then you're ready for the Messianic meal.  
You're blessed when the tears flow freely.  
Joy comes with the morning.

“Count yourself blessed every time someone cuts you down or throws you out, every time someone smears or blackens your name to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and that that person is uncomfortable. You can be glad when that happens—skip like a lamb, if you like!—for even though they don’t like it, I do . . . and all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company; my preachers and witnesses have always been treated like this.

But it’s trouble ahead if you think you have it made.

What you have is all you’ll ever get.

And it’s trouble ahead if you’re satisfied with yourself.

Your *self* will not satisfy you for long.

And it’s trouble ahead if you think life’s all fun and games.

There’s suffering to be met, and you’re going to meet it.

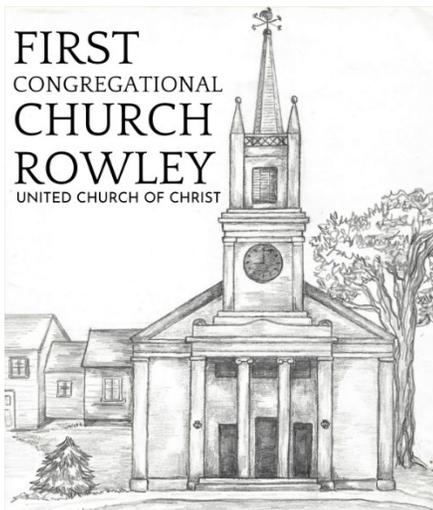
“There’s trouble ahead when you live only for the approval of others, saying what flatters them, doing what indulges them. Popularity contests are not truth contests—look how many scoundrel preachers were approved by your ancestors! Your task is to be true, not popular.

**Message: “The Truth That Is Too Close For Comfort”**

**Closing Song: “ ’Tis Winter Now; the Fallen Snow “ <https://youtu.be/bLKC2qkqGz0>**

**Benediction: Rev. Tom Bentley**

Deacons: Nicola Pyburn and Ken Sanford



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*Does anyone know who drew this picture of the church?  
It would be nice to credit the artist.*

## Rain Down

<https://youtu.be/pmOswvlS6CQ>

Chorus:

Rain down

Rain down

Rain down your love on your people

Rain down

Rain down

Rain down your love, God of life

Faithful and true is the Word of our God  
All of God's works are so worthy of trust  
God's mercy falls on the just and the right  
Full of God's love is the earth

Chorus

We who revere and find hope in our God  
Live in the kindness and joy of God's wing  
God will protect us from darkness and death  
God will not leave us to starve

Chorus

## Oh Love That Will Not Let Me Go

<https://youtu.be/GVOG15Zj5KM>

Oh love that will not let me go  
I rest my weary soul in thee  
I give thee back the life I owe  
That in thine ocean depths its flow  
May richer, fuller be

Oh light that followest all my way  
I yield my flickering torch to thee  
My heart restores its borrowed ray  
That in thy sunshine's blaze its day  
May brighter, fairer be

Oh joy that seekest me through pain  
I cannot close my heart to thee  
I trace the rainbow through the rain  
And feel the promise is not vain  
That morn shall tearless be

Oh cross that liftest up my head  
I dare not ask to fly from thee  
I lay in dust's life's glory dead  
And from the ground there blossoms red  
Life that shall endless be

## 'Tis Winter Now; the Fallen Snow

<https://youtu.be/bLKC2qkqGz0>

'Tis winter now; the fallen snow  
Has left the heav'ns all coldly clear;  
Through leafless boughs the sharp winds blow,  
And all the earth lies dead and drear.

And yet God's love is not withdrawn;  
His life within the keen air breathes;  
His beauty paints the crimson dawn,  
And clothes the boughs with glittering  
wreaths.

And though abroad the sharp winds blow,  
And skies are chill, and frosts are keen,  
Home closer draws her circle now,  
And warmer glows her light within.

O God! Who giv'st the winter's cold  
As well as summer's joyous rays,  
Us warmly in Thy love enfold,  
And keep us through life's winter