

THE FIRST CONGREGATION CHURCH, UCC



JANUARY 22, 2023

ANNOUNCEMENTS

"Get to Know You Question" for Sunday, January 22nd: What is your favorite thing to do on a rainy day, and why?"

Page Turners for January: We are reading "Buddha is as Buddha Does" by Surya Das, and all are invited to join us for the discussion on January 23rd from 2-3pm in the Chapel at Wesley UMC or on Zoom.

The **Anti-Racism Study Group** will continue its work on Tuesday, January 17 from 7-8, on Zoom. All are welcome and need to first register with Pastor Emilia. This coming session, we will be reflecting on "Shoutin in The Fire: An American Epistle" by Dante Stewart.

Merrimack County Nursing Home is again accepting Cards, Magazines, and Calendars. Please donate only 2023 calendars and CURRENT magazines (examples: National Geographic, Home & Garden, Reader's Digest, etc.) Donations can be placed in the box outside of the Chapel doors.

Welcome to First Congregational Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

Worship Service 10:30am

January 22, 2023

***Please stand if you are able**

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

SETTING OUR INTENTIONS FOR WORSHIP

CALL TO WORSHIP: (written by Rochelle A. Stackhouse)

May God be with you

And also with you.

The Spirit of God is upon us!

The Spirit of Hope and Joy! The Spirit of Challenge and Truth!

The Spirit of God is upon us, because God has anointed us,

To bring good tidings to the poor, to bind up the broken hearted.

God has anointed us,

To proclaim liberty to the captives, to comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comfortable, to join our bodies with Christ in service and song.

Alleluia! Come, Holy Spirit!

Bringing Ourselves into God's Presence: (www.themuddyfork.org)

Creator God, thank you for the gift of creation. May we be good stewards of your many gifts within our care. Amen.

*SONG: #478

I've Got Peace Like a River (Public Domain)

I've got peace like a river I've got peace like a river

I've got peace like a river in my soul

I've got peace like a river I've got peace like a river

I've got peace like a river in my soul

I've got joy like a fountain I've got joy like a fountain

I've got joy like a fountain in my soul

I've got joy like a fountain I've got joy like a fountain

I've got joy like a fountain in my soul

I've got love like an ocean I've got love like an ocean

I've got love like an ocean in my soul

I've got love like an ocean I've got love like an ocean

I've got love like an ocean in my soul

I've got faith like a river I've got faith like a river

I've got faith like a river in my soul

I've got faith like a river I've got faith like a river

I've got faith like a river in my soul

Hear now Psalm 56 from the Rev. Benjamin Chavis psalter...

Psalter Lesson

Psalm 56

Here ends the Psalter Lesson.

Amen.

Hear now from the Hebrew Scriptures...

Hebrew Scriptures

Genesis 1:6-8 (NRSVUE)

Rev. Emilia Halstead

⁶ And God said, 'Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' ⁷ So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. ⁸ God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

Here ends the Lesson.

Amen.

Hear now from the Gospel according to John...

Gospel Lesson

John 9:1-12 (The Message)

Carol Hovey

9 ¹⁻² Walking down the street, Jesus saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked, "Rabbi, who sinned: this man or his parents, causing him to be born blind?"

³⁻⁵ Jesus said, "You're asking the wrong question. You're looking for someone to blame. There is no such cause-effect here. Look instead for what God can do. We need to be energetically at work for the One who sent me here, working while the sun shines. When night falls, the workday is over. For as long as I am in the world, there is plenty of light. I am the world's Light."

⁶⁻⁷ He said this and then spit in the dust, made a clay paste with the saliva, rubbed the paste on the blind man's eyes, and said, "Go, wash at the Pool of Siloam" (Siloam means "Sent"). The man went and washed—and saw.

⁸ Soon the town was buzzing. His relatives and those who year after year had seen him as a blind man begging were saying, "Why, isn't this the man we knew, who sat here and begged?"

⁹ Others said, "It's him all right!"

But others objected, "It's not the same man at all. It just looks like him."

He said, "It's me, the very one."

¹⁰ They said, "How did your eyes get opened?"

¹¹ "A man named Jesus made a paste and rubbed it on my eyes and told me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' I did what he said. When I washed, I saw.

Here ends the Lesson.

Amen.

SONG: #163

Many Are the Lightbeams

Many Are the Lightbeams, Olle Widestrand, David Lewis

Tune: © 1974, Olle Widestrand Text: Anders Frostenson, © 1972, AF-Foundation Hymns and Song, Verbum; English tr. by David Lewis

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Many are the lightbeams from the one light.
Our one light is Jesus. Many are the lightbeams
from the one light; we are one in Christ.

Many are the branches of the one tree.
Our one tree is Jesus. Many are the braches of
the one tree; we are one in Christ.

May are the gifts given, love is all one.
Love's the gift of Jesus. Many are the gifts given,
Love is all one; we are one in Christ.

Many ways to serve God, the Spirit is one;
servant spirit of Jesus. Many ways to serve God,
the Spirit is one; we are one in Christ.

Many are the members, the body is one,
members all of Jesus. Many are the members,
the body is one; we are one in Christ.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

(Response to each prayer:)

God of waters above and below,
Receive our prayers.

PASTORAL PRAYER (written by Sue Henley)

Lord's Prayer:

**Our Father, which 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for
ever and ever. Amen.**

Sung Amen: #160 Jesus, the Light of the World [Refrain]

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (Jesus, the Light of the World), Pilgrim Press

Tune: Arr. ©1993 The Pilgrim Press

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We will follow the Light, beautiful Light,
Come where the dew drops of mercy are bright,
Shine all around us by day and by night,
Jesus, the Light of the world

Offertory

Invitation (written by Jeffrey F. Nelson)

GRATITUDE MUSIC

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (written by Jeffrey F. Nelson)

We will extol you, O God, because we cried out for help, and you healed us. In your mercy, you did not leave us in our prosperity, but called us to share our wealth, our time, ourselves with others out of gratitude for your great love. Because of this, our souls praise you and cannot be silent. How can we keep from singing? Amen.

*CLOSING SONG: #476

My Life Flows on in Endless Song

How Can I Keep From Singing, ENDLESS SONG, Robert Lowry, Randall DeBruyn

Text: 8.7.8.7.D. with refrain; attr. to Robert Lowry, 1826-1899, alt.; Verse 3, Doris Plenn.

Music: Quaker Hymn; attr. to Robert Lowry.

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[Kathy, please insert all 4 verses]

My life flows on in endless song,
above earth's lamentation.

I hear the sweet, though far-off hymn
that hails a new creation.

Through all the tumult and the strife,
I hear that music ringing.

It finds an echo in my soul.

How can I keep from singing?

What though my joys and comforts die?

My Savior still is living.

What though the shadows gather round?

A new song Christ is giving.

No storm can shake my inmost calm,

While to the Rock I'm clinging;

Since Love commands both heaven and earth,

How can I keep from Singing?

When tyrants tremble, sick with fear,

And hear their death knells ringing;

When friends rejoice both far and near,

How can I keep from singing?

In Prison cell and dungeon vile our thoughts

to them are winging; When friends by

shame are undefiled,

how can I keep from singing?

Continued on next page

I lift my eyes; the cloud grows thin;
I see the blue above it;
And day by day this pathway smooths,
Since first I learned to love it.
The peace of Christ makes
Fresh my heart, a fountain ever springing!
All things are mine since I am Christ's -
How can I keep from singing?

SETTING OUR INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK AHEAD

SENDING & BENEDICTION (written by Jane O. Sorenson, Martha Cleveland, and Arlys G.)

The book on the shelf said, "Do it yourself."

Perhaps this only applies to furniture, or home repair, or making jam.

But Holy One, these we cannot do alone.

We cannot learn without a teacher;

We cannot teach without knowledge;

We cannot comfort without a tender heart;

We cannot sing without joy;

We cannot challenge without courage.

Grant us your wisdom, strength, and love as we go out from here to do your bidding. Amen.

POSTLUDE