

Welcome to First Congregational Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

October 4, 2020

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

PRELUDE "Unpack Your Heart" (by Philip Phillips on mp3)

SETTING OUR INTENTIONS FOR WORSHIP

UNISON OPENING PRAYER:

Lord God of grace and liberty, On the night of the Passover the sacrificed lamb became a sign of freedom and you freed the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt. In Jesus, you freed all humanity from sin and death. Help us live into this new life, teaching us to serve you in faithfulness as you have served us. To you we offer our gratefulness in the name of the one who turned slavery into new life, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

SONG: #551 Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior (Franny Cosby, 1820-1915)

Pass me not, O gentle Savior, hear my humble cry
While on others you are calling, do not pass me by.

Refrain: Savior, Savior, hear my humble cry
While on others you are calling, do not pass me by.

Let me at your throne of mercy, find a sweet relief
Kneeling there in deep contrition, help my unbelief.

Refrain

Trusting only in your merit, would I seek your face
Heal my wounded, broken spirit, save me by your grace.

Refrain

Be the Spring of all my comfort, more than life to me
Not just here on earth beside me, but eternally.

Refrain

HEBREW SCRIPTURES

Exodus 12:1-13; 13:1-8 (The Voice)

Eternal One said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, "Mark this month as the first month of all months for you—the first month of your year. Declare this message to the entire community of Israel:

"When the tenth day of this month arrives, every family is to select a lamb, one for each household. If there aren't enough people in the family to eat an entire lamb, then they should share a lamb with their nearest neighbor according to how many people are in the neighbor's family. Divide the portions of the lamb so that each person has enough to eat. Choose a one-year-old male that is intact and free of blemishes; you can take it from the sheep or the goats. Keep this chosen lamb safe until the fourteenth day of the month, then the entire community of Israel will slaughter their lambs together at twilight. They are to take some of its blood and smear it across the top and down the two sides of the doorframe of the houses where they plan to eat. That night, have them roast the lamb over a fire and feast on it along with bitter herbs and bread made without yeast. Do not eat any meat raw or boil it in water; only eat the meat after the entire animal has been roasted over a fire with its head, legs, and intestines attached. Eat whatever you can, but don't leave any of it until morning; whatever is left over in the morning burn in the fire. Here is how I want you to eat this meal: Be sure you are dressed and ready to go at a moment's notice—with sandals on your feet and a walking stick in your hand. Eat quickly because this is My Passover.

I am going to pass through the land of Egypt during the night and put to death all their firstborn children and animals. I will also execute My judgments against all the gods of the Egyptians, for I am the Eternal One! The blood on the door frames of your houses will be a sign of where you are. When I pass by and see the blood, I will pass over you. This plague will not afflict you when I strike the land of Egypt with death.

[...]

Eternal One said to Moses, "Set apart all of the firstborn and dedicate them to Me. The first male offspring—both human and animal—that opens the womb among the people of Israel belongs to me."

Moses said to the people, "Remember this day, the day when you departed from Egypt and left behind lives of slavery. For the strong hand of the Eternal has freed you from Pharaoh and his Egypt. In observing this day, be careful not to eat any food containing yeast. You are leaving today in the month of Abib. When He leads you into the land which He promised your ancestors He would give to you—a wide, open space flowing with milk and honey, a land currently inhabited by the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Amorites, and Jebusites—I want you to observe the following festival during this month: For seven days, you are to eat only bread made without yeast. On the seventh day, celebrate a feast in honor of the Eternal. Remember the directive: only bread made without yeast can be eaten during the seven festival days. Don't keep any bread with yeast around; in fact, get rid of all yeast anywhere in your territory during those days. You are to explain to your children on that day, "We observe this feast because of what the Eternal did for me when I came out of Egypt."

GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 22:14-20 (The Voice)

Jesus said, "It has been My deep desire to eat this Passover meal with you before my suffering begins. Know this: I will not eat another Passover meal until its meaning is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

He took a cup of wine and gave thanks for it. Jesus said, "Take this; share it among yourselves. Know this: I will not drink another sip of wine until the kingdom of God has arrived in fullness."

Then He took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and shared it with them. Jesus said, "This is my body, my body given for you. Do this to remember me."

And similarly, after the meal had been eaten, He took the cup. Jesus said, "This cup, which is poured out for you, is the new covenant, made in my blood."

HOMILY

"Joining Households Together"

Rev. Emilia Halstead

PRAYERS OF INTERSESSION:

(Response: Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**)

LORD'S PRAYER (Translation by Neil Douglas-Klotz in Prayers of the Cosmos)

O Birther! Father-Mother of the Cosmos, focus your light within us - make it useful. Create your reign of unity now-through our fiery hearts and willing hands. Help us love beyond our ideals and sprout acts of compassion for all creatures. Animate the earth within us: we then feel the Wisdom underneath supporting all. Untangle the knots within so that we can mend our hearts' simple ties to each other. Don't let surface things delude us, but free us from what holds us back from our true purpose. Out of you, the astonishing fire, returning light and sound to the cosmos. Amen.

SETTING OUR INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK AHEAD

CLOSING SONG: #473

Blessed Assurance

(Fanny Crosby, 1873)

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God, born of His Spirit, washed in Christ's blood.

Refrain: This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long;
This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.

Perfect submission, perfect delight! I in my rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels descending, bring from above echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

Refrain

Perfect submission, all is at rest, I in my Savior am happy and blessed;
Watching and waiting, looking above, filled with God's goodness, lost in Christ's love.

Refrain

BENEDICTION & SENDING