

# Welcome to First Congregational Church

*An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ*

**Thanksgiving Sunday—November 22, 2020**

## WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### First Peoples Land Acknowledgement

*We want to acknowledge that we gather as First Congregational Church on the traditional land of the Wabanaki Confederacy, the Abenaki people and the Pennacook people, past and present, and honor with gratitude the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout a thousand generations. This calls us to commit to continuing to learn how to be better stewards of this land we inhabit as well.*

### PRELUDE

The Silent Moon

(Adel)

## SETTING OUR INTENTIONS FOR WORSHIP

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP:

This place of worship has been prepared for us to come with songs of thanksgiving before our God. Bring your gifts to the altar and share your stories of blessings!

**God has provided so much—even this beautiful day—So let's raise our voices and celebrate!**

### \*BRINGING OURSELVES INTO GOD'S PRESENCE:

**God, whose fondness for humanity knows no limit - Write your word upon our hearts, so that we need no scroll, no book, no script to know that you love us. Show us the power of your covenant, that you will be faithful to us, even when we fail to remain faithful to you. For the beauty of your word inscribed upon us, we pray, in the name of the one whose body and blood became your new covenant with us, Jesus Christ, our redeemer. Amen.**

### \*OPENING HYMN: #421

We Gather Together

We gather together to ask the God's blessing,  
to live in community, seeking God's will.

We come now, as sisters and brothers, confessing  
The sins that divide and the wrong in us still.

Beside us, forgiving, enabling, sustaining,  
You call us, O Savior, to life that is new.  
You draw us away from self-centered complaining,  
You lead us and guide us in ways that are true.

All praise to the Spirit, provider, defender.  
You offer us freedom, to follow or stray.  
Empowering all by the hope you engender.  
Grant wisdom and courage to follow your way.

## LITANY OF CONFESSION:

Thanksgiving Day provides an opportunity for us to take stock of God's blessings, and to reflect on our response to those blessings:

- Our Creator, you have made an intricate and diverse world, and set us to cultivate it reverently and responsibly. When we forget our connection with all of creation: **Forgive us.**
- Our Creator, you have made a world of abundance and intend for us to share so that all may have their "daily bread." When we lose the sense of hospitality and community: **Forgive us.**
- Our Creator, you have sent us Jesus, the "Bread of Life" to satisfy our spiritual hunger and thirst. When we do not respond to his justice and mercy: **Forgive us.**
- Every day and all day let us celebrate your goodness. When we fail to turn to you in prayer: **Forgive us.**
- Every day and all day let us shape our very lives by focusing our minds on what is beautiful and worthy of praise. When we forget that you make all things possible: **Forgive us.**

## *Moment of Silence*

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

HEBREW SCRIPTURES: JEREMIAH 36:1-6, 21-23, 27-28; AND THEN 31:31-34

36 In the fourth year of King Jehoiakim son of Josiah of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the Lord: 2 Take a scroll and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel and Judah and all the nations, from the day I spoke to you, from the days of Josiah until today. 3 It may be that when the house of Judah hears of all the disasters that I intend to do to them, all of them may turn from their evil ways, so that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.

4 Then Jeremiah called Baruch son of Neriah, and Baruch wrote on a scroll at Jeremiah's dictation all the words of the Lord that he had spoken to him. 5 And Jeremiah ordered Baruch, saying, "I am prevented from entering the house of the Lord; 6 so you go yourself, and on a fast day in the hearing of the people in the Lord's house you shall read the words of the Lord from the scroll that you have written at my dictation. You shall read them also in the hearing of all the people of Judah who come up from their towns.

[...]

21 Then the king sent Jehudi to get the scroll, and he took it from the chamber of Elishama the secretary; and Jehudi read it to the king and all the officials who stood beside the king. 22 Now the king was sitting in his winter apartment (it was the ninth month), and there was a fire burning in the brazier before him. 23 As Jehudi read three or four columns, the king would cut them off with a penknife and throw them into the fire in the brazier, until the entire scroll was consumed in the fire that was in the brazier

[...]

27 Now, after the king had burned the scroll with the words that Baruch wrote at Jeremiah's dictation, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: 28 Take another scroll and write on it all the former words that were in the first scroll, which King Jehoiakim of Judah has burned. [and then, hearing the echo of the covenantal promise...]

31 The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. 32 It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. 33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

HYMN: #419

Now Thank We All Our God

1 Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices,  
 who wondrous things has done, in whom his world rejoices;  
 who from our parents' arms has blessed us on our way  
 with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.

2 O may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,  
 with ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us,  
 and keep us still in grace, and guide us when perplexed,  
 and free us from all ills in this world and the next.

3 All praise and thanks to God the Maker now be given,  
 to Christ, and Spirit, too, our help in highest heaven,  
 the one eternal God, whom earth and heaven adore;  
 for thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore.

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

## ACT OF PUBLIC MOURNING

## PASTORAL 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.**

## BLESSING OF OUR OFFERING OF FOOD AND FUNDS FOR THE FOOD PANTRY

## \*DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.  
 Praise God all creatures here below.  
 Praise God above ye heavenly hosts.  
 Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

## \*PRAYER OF DEDICATION:

**O God, with thanksgiving and joy, we have returned to you a portion of the blessings you have given to us. Bless us and our gifts for your purposes of Love, Gracious God. Amen.**

SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

\*COMMUNION HYMN: #337

Draw Us In the Spirit's Tether

Draw us in the Spirit's tether, for when humbly in your name,  
Two or three are met together you are in the midst of them;  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Touch we now Thy garment's hem.

As disciples used to gather in the name of Christ to sup,  
Then with thanks to God the Giver, break the bread and bless the cup,  
Alleluia! Alleluia! So now bind our friendship up.

All our meals and all our living make as sacraments of you,  
That by caring, helping, giving we may be disciples true.  
Alleluia! Alleluia! We will serve with faith anew.

GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 22:19-20 (NRSV)

19 Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 20 And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:

The Lord of blessings be with you.

**The Lord also be with you.**

Be glad and rejoice, God's people, lifting your hearts to the Restorer of lives.

**We offer them to the God who clothes us in grace.**

People of God, come to the Table where you shall eat and be satisfied.

**With shouts of joy, we gather to praise the name of God!**

Your mouth was filled with laughter, God of our every moment, [...]

With those who lifted thanks by crossed rivers,  
with those who offered gratitude for simple gifts,  
we join our voice in praising your name:

**Holy, holy, holy, God of wonder and delight.**

**All creation is filled with your joy.**

**Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is the One who comes to clothe us in grace.**

**Hosanna in the highest!**

Holy are you, Restorer of broken lives, [...]

As we give thanks for his life and death,  
as we shout with joy for his resurrection,  
we speak of that mystery we call faith:

**Christ died, the righteousness for all.**

**Christ rose, the resurrection for all.**

**Christ will return, the fulfillment for all.**



\*SETTING OUR INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK AHEAD

\*BENEDICTION & SENDING

Gentle Spirit, this week, in our prayers around tables, and on Zoom, help us to discover what is beautiful and call it a blessing,

**Encourage us to recognize the way in which our lives are intertwined with the lives of others and with all of your creation, Gracious Creator.**

Embolden us to praise you with our thanksgiving, sweet Jesus.

Go in peace, Beloved in Christ.

**Our worship has ended—Our service now begins.**

POSTLUDE

The Sparkling Brook

(Adel)

