

Welcome to First Congregational Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

August 23, 2020

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Waly, Waly

(Adele)

SETTING OUR INTENTIONS FOR WORSHIP

OPENING PRAISE & PRAYER (adapted from www.jesuscribbles.wordpress.com)

Creator God, this is the day that You have made!

This is the day you have called Holy: Sabbath day, a rest day, a time-out, out of the world and into the Presence of God: a day for rejoicing.

Make us glad this morning in the Presence of the Lord.

Remove from us our distractions, our heart-worries, our to-dos and should-haves and all the constant stress & strain.

And in its place, O God, give us more of You.

Here in your House, our hearts are filled with peace our mouths with laughter, our tongues with shouts of joy.

Fill us to brimming and overflowing with the joy of the Lord: A good measure of God, pressed down, shaken together and running over.

**We are glad, yes, we are glad indeed, to be together in the Presence of the Lord!
Let us worship God!**

SONG: #23

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea;

There's a kindness in God's justice, which is more than liberty.

There's no place where earthly sorrows are more felt than in God's Heaven;

There is no place where earthly failings have such kindly judgment given.

For the love of God is broader than the measure of our minds;

And the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.

If our love were but more faithful, we would gladly trust God's word;

And our lives would show thanksgiving for the goodness of our God.

AGAPE FEAST

GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 6:37-42 (The Voice)

37 If you don't want to be judged, don't judge. If you don't want to be condemned, don't condemn. If you want to be forgiven, forgive. 38 Don't hold back—give freely, and you'll have plenty poured back into your lap—a good measure, pressed down, shaken together, brimming over. You'll receive in the same measure you give.

39 Jesus told them this parable:

Jesus: What happens if a blind man leads a blind man? Won't both of them fall into a pit? 40 You can't turn out better than your teacher; when you're fully taught, you will resemble your teacher.

41 Speaking of blindness: Why do you focus on the speck in your brother's eye? Why don't you see the log in your own? 42 How can you say to your brother, "Oh, brother, let me help you take that little speck out of your eye," when you don't even see the big log in your own eye? What a hypocrite! First, take the log out of your own eye. Then you'll be able to see clearly enough to help your brother with the speck in his eye.

CALL TO THE FEAST

PRAYER OF ADORATION:

Living God, you are present in our midst and we praise you. You are tearing down walls of alienation and exclusion. For this, we praise you because, in Jesus, you have shown us a way of hospitality, simplicity, prayer, peacemaking, and resistance. Because your Spirit makes a new path for us, as we struggle to live in the shadow of doubt and fear. Weak as we are, you fill us with hope. Lover of our souls, you give us joy and we praise you. Amen.

SIGNS & SYMBOLS

SHARING THE FEAST

"Smallest Handmade Sculptures" Willard Wigan (Y.T.)

"MODERN" LESSON

"Reclaiming Southern Roots"
(by Maya Angelou, in Letter To My Daughter)

SONG:

I Need Thee Every Hour (Sam Robson on Y.T.)

SERMON

"Being Patient with Our Peers"

Rev. Emilia Halstead

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

(You are invited unmute yourself and share your prayer of joy or sorrow and the gathered body, led by Pastor Emilia will reply "God, hear our prayer.")

PASTORAL PRAYER (written by Jurgen Moltmann, in a sermon entitled "Revolutionary Love of our Enemies" in The Power of the Powerless)

Heavenly Father, we call upon you in Jesus' name.
We come with empty hands.
We have not been able to love our enemies.
As a rule we have never even seen them.
We have avoided them.
When we saw them, we felt only fear and anger, not love.

So we come to you, not as the children of your love,
but as the enemy of our enemies,
beseeching you for ourselves and all the others;
Bless those who curse you,
do good to those who hate you.
Forgive us for what we have failed to do for our enemies.

You lead us out of the constriction of fear
and out of the prison of hate,
into the wide space of freedom.
Let us see your sun,
which rises upon the evil and the good,
and rejoice in its warmth, together with our enemies. Amen.

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

Called as partners in Christ's service, called to ministries of grace,
We respond with deep commitment fresh new lines of faith to trace.
May we learn the art of sharing, side by side and friend with friend,
Equal partners in our caring to fulfil God's chosen end.

Christ's example Christ's inspiring, Christ's clear call to work and worth,
Let us follow, never faltering, reconciling folk on earth.
Men and women, richer, poorer, all God's people, young and old,
Blending human skills together gracious gifts from God unfold.

Thus new patterns for Christ's mission, in a small or global sense,
Help us bear each other's burdens, breaking down each wall or fence,
Words of comfort, words of vision, words of challenge said with care,
Bring new power and strength for action, make us colleagues, free and fair.

So God grant us for tomorrow ways to order human life
That surround each person's sorrow with a calm that conquers strife.
Make us partners in our living, our compassion to increase,
Messengers of faith thus giving hope and confidence and peace.

BENEDICTION & SENDING: (written by Rev. Mary Luti)

Our worship has ended, but its gifts remain: Tuck its praise inside you.
Tuck its goodness with you.

**Drink from its wells of lasting peace. Live by its light, its courage
and grace, and don't be afraid.**

Seek to serve. In plenty or want, find ways to share.

Discern the truth and tell it, resist all wrong, and don't be afraid.

Regard all people as your people.

**In hard times and good, take care of yourself, take care of your
people, and don't be afraid.**

And may the blessing of God, our life,
the friendship of Christ, our healer,
and the daring of the Spirit, our truth,
be ours today, and everyday to come. Amen.