

Welcome to First Congregational Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

August 29, 2021

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

FIRST PEOPLES LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The First Congregational Church of Concord acknowledges that indigenous peoples and nations, including the Wabanaki Confederacy, the Abenaki people, and the Penacook people have stewarded throughout the generations the lands and waterways that are now called the state of New Hampshire. We honor and respect the enduring relationship that exists between these peoples and nations with this land.

Prelude "Granada" from Suite Espanola by Isaac Albeniz Annelise Papinsick

SETTING OUR INTENTIONS FOR WORSHIP

CALL TO WORSHIP: (by J. Philip Newell "Celtic Benediction")

We watch this morning,

For the light that the darkness has not overcome.

We watch for the fire that was in the beginning,

That still burns in the brilliance of the rising sun.

We watch for the glow of life that gleams in the growing Earth,

And glistens in the sea and sky.

We watch for your light, O God, in the eyes of every living creature,

And in the ever-living flame of our own souls.

If the grace of seeing was ours this day,

We would glimpse you in all that lives.

Grant us the grace of seeing this day.

Grant us the grace of seeing.

Bringing Ourselves into God's Presence: (by J. Philip Newell "Celtic Benediction")

Blessed are you, O Child of the Dawn, for your light that dapples through creation: on leaves that shimmer in the morning sun and in showers of rain that wash the Earth. Blessed are you for the human Spirit dappled with eternal light in its longings for love and birth and its painful passion and tears. Blessed are you, O Christ, for you awaken us to life. Blessed are you, for you stir us to true desire. Amen.

OPENING SONG #73

Enter Rejoice and Come In

*Enter, rejoice, and come in. Enter, rejoice, and come in.
Today will be a joyful day; enter, rejoice, and come in.*

*Open yourself to the song. Open yourself to the song.
Today will be a joyful day; enter, rejoice, and come in.*

*Open your hearts everyone. Open your hearts everyone.
Today will be a joyful day; enter, rejoice, and come in.*

*Don't be afraid of some change. Don't be afraid of some change.
Today will be a joyful day; enter, rejoice, and come in.*

*Enter, rejoice, and come in. Enter, rejoice, and come in.
Today will be a joyful day; enter, rejoice, and come in.*

HEBREW SCRIPTURES

Malachi 4:2 (The Voice)

Carolyn Andrews

² But for you, the ones who tremble at the sound of My name, *a warm* sun of righteousness will come forth with healing in its rays, and you will go out, springing from the stalls like calves in open pasture.

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

Revelation 21:4-5 (The Message)

Carolyn Andrews

³⁻⁵ I heard a voice thunder from the Throne: "Look! Look! God has moved into the neighborhood, making his home with men and women! They're his people, he's their God. He'll wipe every tear from their eyes. Death is gone for good—tears gone, crying gone, pain gone—all the first order of things gone." The Enthroned continued, "Look! I'm making everything new. Write it all down—each word dependable and accurate."

SERMON "Does God Wear Zip-up Sweaters and Tie-on Sneakers?"

By Rev. Emilia Halstead

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 his justice
which is more than liberty.

There's no place where earthly sorrows
are more felt than God's heaven:
there's no place where earthly failings
have such kindly judgement given.

For the love of God is broader
than the measures 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..

INVITATION TO GIVE (by Harvard Health)

Gratitude Music Baba Yetu (which means, "Our Father")
(Written by Christopher Tin, Performed by Stellenbosch University Choir, South Africa)

UNISON PRAYER OF GRATITUDE (BY J. PHILIP NEWELL, "CELTIC TREASURE")

You have taught us, O Christ, to love the world. You have shown us the light that is within us and within all things. May we learn to love you more, and in loving you more learn to love the Earth and all of its people more, for you are the light of all life. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

PASTORAL PRAYER (FROM GATES OF HEALING BY CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS)

Lord's Prayer: (from the New Zealand Prayer Book)

Eternal spirit, Earth-maker, Life-giver, Pain-bearer, Source of all that is and ever shall be, your name be sung with joy! Your peace, your justice, your mercy come on Earth. With the food we need for today, feed us. For the hurt we cause, forgive us. As we lose the way, restore us. When we are enslaved by evil, transform us. For you are the way, and the truth, and the life, now and forever. Amen.

HEALING RITUAL

SETTING OUR INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK AHEAD

CLOSING SONG #76 Sent Forth by God's Blessing

Sent forth by God's blessing, our true faith confessing, the people of God from this dwelling take leave. The service is ended. O now be extended the fruits of our worship in all who believe. The seed of the teaching, receptive hearts reaching, shall blossom in action for God and for all. God's grace did invite us, and love shall unite us to work for God's realm and to answer the call.

With praise and thanksgiving to God ever living, the tasks of our everyday life we will face. Our faith ever sharing, in love ever caring, embracing God's children of each tribe and race. With your grace you feed us, with your light now lead us; unite us as one in this life that we share. Then may all the living with praise and thanksgiving give honor to Christ and His name that we bear.

UNISON SENDING & BLESSING (from J. Philip Newell in "Celtic Benediction")

**May the light of God illuminate the heart of our souls.
May the flame of Christ kindle us to love.
May the fire of the Spirit free us to live this day, tonight, and forever. Amen.**

POSTLUDE

"Cat in the Corner"

Annelise Papinsick