

Welcome to First Congregational Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

September 19, 2021

Welcome and Announcements

First Peoples Land Acknowledgement

Founded in 1730, the First Congregational Church of Concord sits on the traditional lands of the Wabanaki Confederacy, the Abenaki people, and the Pennacook people. The original peoples of this land, now called the state of New Hampshire, since time immemorial have made significant contributions to the broader community statewide. We honor the land itself and those who remain stewards of this land throughout the generations.

Prelude

Pero Queda Cristo

Annie

SETTING OUR INTENTIONS FOR WORSHIP

CALL TO WORSHIP: (The Casa del Sol Blessings of Jesus; based Matthew 5:3-9)

Blessed are those who know their need,

For theirs is the grace of heaven.

Blessed are those who weep,

For their tears will be wiped away.

Blessed are the humble,

For they are close to the sacred earth.

Blessed are those who hunger for earth's oneness,

For they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the forgiving,

For they are free.

Blessed are the clear in heart,

For they see the Living Presence.

Blessed are the peacemakers,

For they are born of God.

Bringing Ourselves into God's Presence: (by WorkingPreacher.org)

God of promise, you stayed the hand of Abraham and fulfilled the promise you made to him, that he would father a great nation. Keep your promises to us, that we become inheritors of eternal life. Amen.

REV. BENJAMIN CHAVIS PSALTER LESSON

PSALM 2

MUSICAL REFLECTION

God of Abraham and Sarah (#20)

God of Abraham and Sarah, God of Moses, Miriam's Guide;

God of David and the prophets, God in Jesus glorified.

Up from the dust you raise a people, breathe in the breath of life, of soul;

Down through the years the people praise you till alleluias make them whole!

In our lives from birth to dying, depth of sorrow, height of joy;

Praising God in every season, let every key our hearts employ.

Praise is the healing, praise, the glory, praise is the final mystery;

Down through the years let people praise you all alleluias set them free!

The LORD dealt with Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as he had promised. Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him. Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him.

After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you." So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had show him. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you." Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham said, "God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together.

When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place "The LORD will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided."

GOSPEL LESSON

John 1:29 (NRSV)

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

SERMON

"Divine Brain-Teaser"

Rev. Emilia Halstead

PAUSE FOR SILENT REFLECTION

MUSICAL REFLECTION

Not with Naked Eye, Not with Human Sense (#406)

Not with naked eye,
not with human sense:
through the eye of faith
observe omnipotence.

Not a golden king,
Not a mighty queen.
God's in earth and heaven
And all that lies between.

Children learn of God
Sitting in the grass,
touching, tasting, seeking,
hearing Jesus pass.

Not with crafted scope,
not with crystal lens:
vision of the Christ
begins where seeing ends.

INVITATION TO GIVE

Gratitude Music

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise (#1)

Annie

UNISON PRAYER OF GRATITUDE:

**Praise Creator from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ the Word in flesh born low;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;
One God, Triune, whom we adore. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

PASTORAL PRAYER (BY J. PHILIP NEWELL, "CELTIC TREASURE")

Lord's Prayer: (translated from the Aramaic by Neil Douglas-Klotz)

O Thou! The Breathing Life of all, Creator of the Shimmering Sound that touches us. Help us breathe one holy breath feeling only you--this creates a shrine inside, in wholeness. Let your counsel rule our lives, clearing our intention for co-creation. Let all wills move together in your vortex, as stars and planets swirl through the sky. Give us the food we need to grow through each new day, through each illumination of life's needs. Forgive our hidden past, the secret shames, as we consistently forgive what others hide. Don't let us enter forgetfulness, the temptation of false appearances. To you belongs each fertile function: ideals, energy, glorious harmony--during every cosmic cycle. Amen.

My faith, it is an oaken staff,
The traveler's well-loved aid;
My faith, it is a song of trust,
sustains me undismayed.
I'll travel on, and still be stirred
By silent thought or social word;
By all my perils undeterred,
A pilgrim unafraid.

My faith, it is an oaken staff,
O let me on it lean!
My faith, provides the ground of hope,
Supports a purpose keen.
Your Spirit, God, upon me send
That I may be what you intend.
With patient courage,
We'll contend as radiant saints serene.

SETTING OUR INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK AHEAD

SENDING & BENEDICTION (from J. Philip Newell in "Praying with the Earth")
May the angels of light glisten for us this day.

May the sparks of God's beauty dance in the eyes of those we love.

May the universe be on fire with Presence for us this day.

May the new sun's rising grace us with gratitude.

Let earth's greenness shine and its waters breathe with Spirit.

Let heaven's winds stir the soil of our souls, so that fresh awakenings rise within us.

May the mighty angels of light glisten in all things this day.

May they summon us to reverence, may they call us to life. Amen.

POSTLUDE

Sent Forth by God's Blessing

Annie

