



First Congregational

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**“Hopeful, Afflicted, Bold”
5th Sunday after Epiphany
February 7, 2021
10:30 a.m. Facebook Live Service**

*Following Jesus, our mission is to serve God
by building an inclusive community where uplifting worship
and relevant messages deepen spirituality
and inspire acts of justice, service, and compassion.*

Our Church’s Mission Statement

Rev. Dr. Laura Miller-Purrenhage, Pastor
Angela Spialek, Office Administrator
Nicole Finney, Child Care
Sue Sackett, Custodian
Rev. John Baumgartner, Pastor Emeritus

Judy Nielsen, Organist
Darlene Banks, Bell Choir Director
Brandon Frost, Choir Director
Chuck Byam, Choir Accompanist

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Welcome to First Congregational United Church of Christ!

As you look over the bulletin, please notice that you are invited to read aloud **bold** text.

MOMENT FOR CENTERING

GREETING

One: The grace of Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Many: And also with you.

INTRODUCTIONS and ANNOUNCEMENTS

BELLS/CHIMES

INTROIT

“Thine is the Glory”

(Judy Nielsen)

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Friends in Christ, what hopes do you bring to worship?

Many: We bring hope for health and wholeness.

One: What afflictions do you bring to worship? Physical pain?

Many: From illness and injury.

One: Emotional pain?

Many: From sad and frightening life situations, from loss of health, of jobs, of friends and family, from loneliness and isolation.

One: Mental pain?

Many: From dis-ease of many kinds.

One: With all of these afflictions, it’s a miracle that any of us have made it to worship this morning!

Many: But where else would we be? We yearn to know God’s powerful love and to know that wholeness is possible.

One: In today’s gospel reading, Jesus meets people with many afflictions.

Many: And Jesus heals them and sets them free.

One: And where does the miracle of this story and our stories begin?

Many: When we bring all of who we are--hopeful, afflicted, bold—into relationship with the Divine.

One: So come, let us enter this time of worship with our whole selves

Many: Hopeful, afflicted and bold

One: Come, let us worship!

OPENING HYMN # 472

“Precious Lord, Take My Hand”

(please feel free to sing loud and strong from your place at home)

GATHERING PRAYER

One: Please join me in prayer:

**Many: God grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change;
courage to change the things we can; and wisdom to know the difference.
Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
Taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as we would have it;
Trusting that God will make all things right if we surrender to God's Will;
That we may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with
God Forever in the next. Amen.**

PASSING OF THE PEACE

FRESH PERSPECTIVES

Lynn Hart

INTRODUCTION TO SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Rev. Dr. Laura Miller-Purrenhage

SCRIPTURE OF LAMENT

Job 3:16-26 (pg. 445)

PRAYERS OF LAMENT

(Since our services are posted publicly on Facebook, we ask that you either leave people unnamed in your prayer requests [ex: prayers for a friend who is in his last stages of life] or that you obtain permission from anyone you wish to name in prayer.)

HYMN #553

"There is a Balm in Gilead"

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Isaiah 40:21-31 NRSV (pg. 654)

ANTHEM

"On Eagle's Wings"
(Brandon Frost and Chuck Byam)

PSALM

Psalms 147: 1-11, 20c (pg. 570)

SUNG RESPONSE #780

"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.**

GOSPEL LESSON

Mark 1:29-39 NRSV (pg. 911)

MUSICAL REFLECTION

"I Found the Answer"
(Chuck Byam)

PRAYERS OF JOY, HOPE AND THANKSGIVING

(Since our services are posted publicly on Facebook, we ask that you either leave people unnamed in your prayer requests [ex: prayers for a friend who is in his last stages of life] or that you obtain permission from anyone you wish to name in prayer.)

OFFERING MOMENT

*Please give what you can by mail or through prayers.
If you have any questions, please reach out to Lynn Hart hartacre3@aol.com*

INVITATION TO HOLY COMMUNION

COMMUNION PRAYER

One: God be with you.

Many: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

Many: We lift them to God.

One: Let us give thanks to God Most High.

Many: It is good to give God thanks and praise.

CALL TO CONFESSION:

One: Please join me in prayer.

**Many: O Divine Healer, we confess that sometimes we yearn for you
to wave a magic wand on our wounded lives and nation
to remove our pain, illness, and suffering.**

**We hear the gospel story of the ones seeking healing from Jesus
and assume you will perform a similar miracle for all of us –
if we just pray hard enough!**

And we do pray!

But often, that miracle that we're looking for doesn't happen.

So we lose faith. We feel angry. We don't understand.

We turn away from you.

**But especially in these moments of disappointment and grief,
we can find you.**

**So we ask that you open our eyes to recognize the teachings and tools
you have given us with which to seek healing
in the midst of our afflictions, losses, and dis-eases.**

**You whisper to us that wholeness requires self-care and rest;
(what are some ways...?)**

**You nudge us toward caregivers and helpers who can support and advise
us;**

(who may help us...?)

**You breathe into us energy to move and stretch and reach toward health
in our bodies, health in our communities, and health in our nation;**

(what are some ways...?)

**You place in us an urgency to seek justice so that all may enjoy adequate
health care and so that the wounds of our communities and nation can be
truly healed (not just covered up);**

(what are some actions...?)

**Renew our spirits in the midst of our dis-eases, losses and afflicting
spirits.**

Transform us, O Whole-y One, for the health of your creation. Amen.

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

One: Dear ones, in the midst of struggle, loss, dis-ease and affliction, know that you are made in God's image. Thus, you are given internal light, and brimming over with courage, fortitude, and love. God loves and accepts you as you are—whether you are questioning or content, whether you are at peace or in a whirlwind. And so, assured of God's love, grace, and presence, let yourselves feel a renewed sense of hope.

Many: Thanks be to God.

SANCTUS

**Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.
Heav'n and earth are full of your glory.
Glory be to you, O Lord.
Blessed is the one who comes,
Who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest!**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

COMMUNION BLESSING AND LORD'S PRAYER

THANKSGIVING PRAYER

One: Let us pray.

Many: God, we thank you for inviting us to, and nurturing us at, this table. May we go forth strengthened by the assurance of your presence, always trusting in the unexpected goodness that the future can bring; in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, we pray. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN # 475

“God's Eye is On the Sparrow”

(please feel free to sing loud and strong from your place at home)

BENEDICTION

CHORAL RESPONSE

“In the Lord I'll be Ever Thankful” (sung once)

**In the Lord I'll be ever thankful
In the Lord, I will rejoice!
Look to God, do not be afraid.
Lift up your voices, the Lord is near.
Lift up your voices, the Lord is near.**

POSTLUDE

“What A Friend We Have in Jesus - Adaptation”
(Chuck Byam)

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SUNDAY ROSTER

Liturgist – Troy Arient

Fresh Perspective – Lynn Hart

Virtual Coordinator – Chad Frost

Music Coordinator – Brandon Frost

Pianist – Chuck Byam

Organist – Judy Nielsen

Precious Lord, Take My Hand

472

Thomas A. Dorsey, 1932; alt.

1 Pre - cious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand,
 2 When my way grows drear, pre - cious Lord, lin - ger near,
 3 When the shad - ows ap - pear and the night draws near,

I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
 when my life is al - most gone,
 and the day is past and gone,

Through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light:
 Hear me cry, hear my call, hold my hand, lest I fall:
 At the riv - er I stand, guide my feet, hold my hand:

Refrain

Take my hand, pre - cious Lord, lead me home.

Thomas A. Dorsey was known as "Georgia Tom" when he played piano for blues singer Ma Rainey. He started writing gospel songs after what he called "a definite spiritual change." This inspirational song, composed following the deaths of his wife, Nettie, and a newborn child, derives from the tune Maitland.

Tune: PRECIOUS LORD Irr. with refrain
 Thomas A. Dorsey, 1932

553

There Is a Balm in Gilead

Jer. 8:18-22; 46:11; Acts 10:34-43

African-American spiritual; alt.

Refrain

There is a balm in Gil-e-ad, to make the wound-ed whole,

there is a balm in Gil-e-ad, to heal the sin-sick soul.

Last time, end

1 Some - times I feel dis - cour-aged, and think my work's in vain,
 2 Don't ev - er feel dis - cour-aged, for Je - sus is your friend,
 3 If you can - not preach like Pe - ter, if you can - not pray like Paul,

But then the Ho - ly Spir - it re - vives my soul a - gain.
 who, if you ask for knowl-edge, will nev - er fail to lend.
 you can tell the love of Je - sus, who died to save us all.

to Refrain

This is one of the most moving of the African-American spirituals because it illustrates the way in which the enslaved tried to encourage those who were feeling especially weighed down by the burden of their captivity.

Tune: BALM IN GILEAD Irr. with refrain
 African-American spiritual

Stanzas, in unison

1 Why should I feel dis-cour-aged, why should the shad-ows come,
 2 "Let not your heart be trou-bled," Christ's ten-der word I hear,
 3 When-ev-er I am tempt-ed, when-ev-er clouds a-rise,



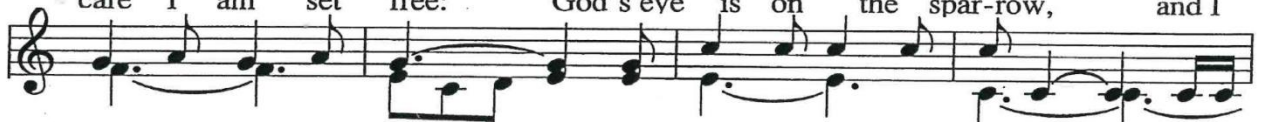
Why should my heart be lone-ly and long for heaven and
 And rest-ing on God's good-ness, I lose my doubts and
 When song gives place to sigh-ing, when hope with-in me



home, When God is ev-er my por-tion? My
 fears; Though by the path . . . God leads me but
 dies, I then draw close to my Sav-ior, from



con-stant friend will be: God's eye is on the spar-row, and I
 one step I may see: God's eye is on the spar-row, and I
 care I am set free: God's eye is on the spar-row, and I



know God watch-es me; God's eye is on the spar-row, and I
 know God watch-es me; God's eye is on the spar-row, and I
 know God watch-es me; God's eye is on the spar-row, and I

Refrain. in harmony

know God watch-es me.
 know God watch-es me. I sing be-cause I'm
 know God watch-es me.



hap-py, I sing be-cause I'm free, God's
 I'm hap-py, I'm free,



eye is on the spar-row, and I know God watch-es me.

Job 3:16-26

- ¹⁶ Or why was I not buried like a stillborn child,
like an infant that never sees the light?
- ¹⁷ There the wicked cease from troubling,
and there the weary are at rest.
- ¹⁸ There the prisoners are at ease together;
they do not hear the voice of the taskmaster.
- ¹⁹ The small and the great are there,
and the slaves are free from their masters.
- ²⁰ “Why is light given to one in misery,
and life to the bitter in soul,
²¹ who long for death, but it does not come,
and dig for it more than for hidden treasures;
²² who rejoice exceedingly,
and are glad when they find the grave?
²³ Why is light given to one who cannot see the way,
whom God has fenced in?
²⁴ For my sighing comes like my bread,
and my groanings are poured out like water.
²⁵ Truly the thing that I fear comes upon me,
and what I dread befalls me.
²⁶ I am not at ease, nor am I quiet;
I have no rest; but trouble comes.”

Isaiah 40:21-31

- ²¹ Have you not known? Have you not heard?
Has it not been told you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?
- ²² It is he who sits above the circle of the earth,
and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;
who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,
and spreads them like a tent to live in;
- ²³ who brings princes to naught,
and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.
- ²⁴ Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,
scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,
when he blows upon them, and they wither,
and the tempest carries them off like stubble.
- ²⁵ To whom then will you compare me,
or who is my equal? says the Holy One.
- ²⁶ Lift up your eyes on high and see:
Who created these?
He who brings out their host and numbers them,
calling them all by name;
because he is great in strength,
mighty in power,
not one is missing.
- ²⁷ Why do you say, O Jacob,
and speak, O Israel,
“My way is hidden from the LORD,
and my right is disregarded by my God”?
- ²⁸ Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.
- ²⁹ He gives power to the faint,
and strengthens the powerless.
- ³⁰ Even youths will faint and be weary,
and the young will fall exhausted;
- ³¹ but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.

Psalm 147:1-11, 20c

Praise God! How good it is to sing praises to our God; for They are gracious, and a song of praise is fitting.

God builds up Jerusalem; They gather the outcasts of Israel.

They heal the brokenhearted, and bind up their wounds.

They determine the number of the stars; They give to all of them their names.

Great is our God, and abundant in power; Their understanding is beyond measure.

God lifts up the downtrodden; God casts the wicked to the ground.

Sing to God with thanksgiving; make melody to our God on the lyre.

God covers the heavens with clouds, prepares rain for the earth, makes grass grow on the hills.

God gives to the animals their food, and to the young ravens when they cry.

God's delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor Their pleasure in the speed of a runner;

but God takes pleasure in those who fear Them, in those who hope in Their steadfast love.

Praise God!

Mark 1:29-39

²⁹ As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. ³⁰ Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. ³¹ He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

³² That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. ³³ And the whole city was gathered around the door. ³⁴ And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

³⁵ In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. ³⁶ And Simon and his companions hunted for him. ³⁷ When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." ³⁸ He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." ³⁹ And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.