



First Congregational

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

“Glorious Paradox”

March 21, 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

Ron Erskine, Preacher

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

“I Cling To Thee”

(Judy Nielsen)

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Let us gather to worship.

Many: O God, we wish to see Jesus! We come to worship, to pray, and learn.

One: We come looking for Jesus in Scripture lessons, in our own life experiences, in helping our world, in prayers for each other.

Many: We seek to follow in the way of Jesus.

One: We lay bare before God and one another our own wilderness journey filled with some gladness and hope, with reluctance and sorrow, with fear and confusion.

Many: O God, speak to us, show us, touch us with your presence!

One: Let our Lenten journey lead us to Jesus, so that we may show Jesus forth in our lives, our faith community, and our world.

Many: Amen.

OPENING HYMN #492

“I Would Be True”

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

GATHERING PRAYER (Unison)

All: God of the journey, you invite us, the church, “to accept the cost and joy of discipleship” and “to be your servants in the service of others.” In so doing, may your presence be our guide and Jesus our model. May we respond to you in loving faithfulness. Amen.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

ANTHEM

“Light a Little Candle”

(Brandon Frost & Chuck Byam)

FRESH PERSPECTIVES

Lisa Reed

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Jeremiah 31:31-34 NRSV (pg. 721)

GOSPEL LESSON

John 12:20-33 NRSV (pg. 980)

One: Words from the past, made new for us today.

Many: Thanks be to God.

SUNG RESPONSE #173

“You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore”

**O Jesus, you have looked into my eyes;
kindly smiling, you’ve called out my name.
On the sand I have abandoned my small boat;
now with you I will seek other seas.**

HOMILY

“Glorious Paradox”
(Ron Erskine)

MUSICAL REFLECTION

“Now the Green Blade Riseth”
(Chuck Byam)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

(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*

CLOSING HYMN #75

“Lord, Make Me More Holy”

(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 – Lisa Reed

Homily – Ron Erskine

Virtual Coordinator – Chad Frost

Music Coordinator – Brandon Frost

Pianist – Chuck Byam

Organist – Judy Nielsen

I Would Be True

St. 1, 2, Howard Arnold Walter, 1917

St. 3, anon.; alt.

1 I would be true, for there are those who trust me; I would be
 2 I would be friend of all, the foe, the friend-less; I would be
 3 I would be prayer-ful through each bus-y mo-ment; I would be

pure, for there are those who care; I would be strong, for
 giv-ing, and for-get the gift; I would be hum-ble,
 con-stant-ly in touch with God; I would be tuned to

there is much to suf-fer; I would be brave, for
 for I know my weak-ness; I would look up, and
 sense God's slight-est whis-per; I would have faith to

there is much to dare, I would be brave, for there is much to dare.
 laugh, and love, and live, I would look up, and laugh, and love, and live.
 keep the path Christ trod, I would have faith to keep the path Christ trod.

The first two stanzas of this hymn are from "My Creed," a poem that Howard Walter sent to his mother from Japan, where he taught English before becoming a Congregational minister. Walter died at the age of thirty-five while working for the Y.M.C.A. in India.

Tune: PEEK 11.10.11.10.10.
 Joseph Y. Peek, 1911

Lord, Make Me More Holy

75

African-American spiritual

1 Lord, make me more ho - ly. Lord, make me more ho - ly.

The first system of musical notation is in 6/8 time, featuring a treble and bass staff. The melody is in the treble staff, and the bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment. The lyrics are written below the treble staff.

Lord, make me more ho - ly, un - til we meet a - gain.

The second system of musical notation continues the melody and accompaniment. The lyrics are written below the treble staff.

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly un - til we meet a - gain.

The third system of musical notation concludes the main melody and accompaniment. The lyrics are written below the treble staff.

- 2 Lord, make me more faith-ful, . . . Faith-ful, . . . un-til we meet a-gain.
- 3 Lord, make me more hum-ble, . . . Hum-ble, . . . un-til we meet a-gain.
- 4 Lord, make me more righ-teous, . . . Righ-teous, . . . un-til we meet a-gain.

The origins of this African-American spiritual have been traced to the area of Charleston, South Carolina, where it may have been sung as a closing hymn for worship. It is one of a number of devotional songs expressing the desire to attain the spiritual character of Jesus.

Tune: LORD, MAKE ME MORE HOLY
6.6.6.6.6.6.
African-American spiritual

Jeremiah 31:31-34

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.

John 12:20-33

²⁰ Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹ They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” ²² Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³ Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵ Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

²⁷ “Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹ The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰ Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³ He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.