



First Congregational

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**“It Is Good”
Receiving Your Blessings
August 1, 2021
10:30 a.m. 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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• 517-627-2336 • office@grandledgeucc.org

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.
As you enter the sanctuary, please share your offering in the offering plate by the door.
We ask that you wear a mask and social distance from others not in your family or pod*

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

“Lead Me, Lord”

(Judy Nielsen)

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: You call your people to prayer and praise in many ways. This day, bring us together just as you called the people of Israel to gather manna in the desert to eat and sustain life.

Many: God of unity, give us this day our daily bread. Offer us the nutrients we need to remain connected to you.

One: As spiritual beings, we desire to receive food that endures— faith, hope, and love.

Many: God of grace, give us this day our daily bread.

One: All life is created and nourished by you! May we grow into new circles of understanding and being, reflecting the ways in which we have been touched by your holy manna.

Many: Holy Spirit, come! Give us this day our daily bread.

OPENING HYMN #547

“Amazing Grace”

(We will remain seated during the hymns and you are encouraged to quietly follow along and reflect on the verses printed in this bulletin while enjoying the music as it is being played.)

GATHERING PRAYER *(in unison)*

Many: Life Sustainer, we receive the things you desire to offer us today and each new day! Grant us wisdom and openness to your Word and use its teachings to energize our bodies and spirits. Amen.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

ANTHEM

“Be Still and Know”
(Mary Lou Prevost and Linda Gooley)

FRESH PERSPECTIVES

Rev. Dr. Laura Miller-Purrenhage

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Genesis 1:1-Genesis 2:3 NRSV (pg. 1)

1 In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, **2** the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. **3** Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. **4** And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. **5** God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

6 And God said, “Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” **7** So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. **8** God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

9 And God said, “Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. **10** God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. **11** Then God said, “Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.” And it was so. **12** The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. **13** And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

14 And God said, “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, **15** and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. **16** God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. **17** God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, **18** to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. **19** And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

20 And God said, “Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.” **21** So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. **22** God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” **23** And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

24 And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.” And it was so. **25** God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

²⁷ So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” ²⁹ God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. ³¹ God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. ² And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. ³ So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

Ephesians 4:1-6 NRSV (pg. 1066)

4 I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

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

Many: Thanks be to God.

HOMILY

“It Is Good”

(Rev. Dr. Laura Miller-Purrenhage)

MUSICAL REFLECTION

“He Will Carry You”

(Judy Nielsen)

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

(For those of us meeting in person, you are invited to place your offering in the offering plate in the back of the sanctuary. For those of you worshipping at home, please give what you can by mail or through prayers. If you have any questions, please reach out to Lynn Hart hartacre3@aol.com)

DOXOLOGY

DEDICATION PRAYER

One: Let us pray.

Many: Beloved God, accept the gifts we offer, and bless them to the fulfillment of our calling. 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. May it be so. Amen

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 the Prayer of Confession.

Many: God, we confess that we often spoon-feed ourselves items and ideas that do not provide us the energy we need to do your work. We fill ourselves with addictive substances, unhealthy foods, and fill our minds with unhealthy media, feelings of anger, resentment, or shame and negative thoughts. Oftentimes, we are willing to risk our sustained health and well-being for immediate satisfaction. This creates space between you and us, between ourselves and each other, as members of Christ's one body. Forgive us, God, and help us to cope with the negativities of the world in a healthy way. As a part of that, help us to focus on the blessings of our lives. Amen.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

One: Dear Ones, through Jesus, we have been given an example of one who was truly nourished and sustained by God, one who found blessings in all that he did. His example is there to follow, when you feel like you are faltering. In Christ, we are forgiven, made whole, and restored to the one body.

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

SHARING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

COMMUNION SONG

"Come to the Table"
(Mary Lou Prevost and Linda Gooley)

THANKSGIVING PRAYER

One: Let us pray.

Many: God, we thank you for inviting us to, and nurturing us at, this table. We ask that you help us to see, feel and know the many blessings you grant to us, including the blessings offered at this table. May we go forth from this table renewed, restored, and seeing the good in your world. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN #330

"Let Us Break Bread Together"

(We will remain seated during the hymns and you are encouraged to quietly follow along and reflect on the verses printed in this bulletin while enjoying the music as it is being played.)

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

"Blessed Assurance"
(Judy Nielsen)

CREDITS

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SUNDAY ROSTER

Liturgist – Karen Ramthun

Fresh Perspective – Rev. Dr. Laura Miller-Purrenhage

Homily – Rev. Dr. Laura Miller-Purrenhage

Virtual Coordinator –David Gruner

Music Coordinator – Karen Ramthun

Organist – Judy Nielsen

Usher – Bruce Ramthun

Greeter – Chuck Byam

Sound Board – Charlynn Walker

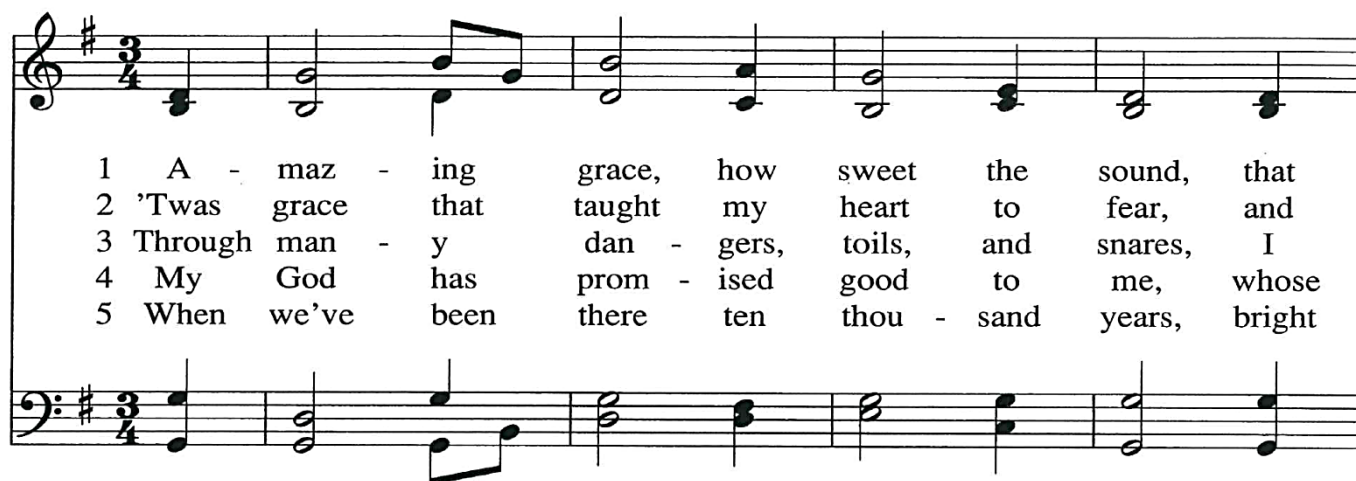
Guest Musicians – Mary Lou Prevost and Linda Gooley

Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound

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St. 1-4, John Newton, 1779; alt.

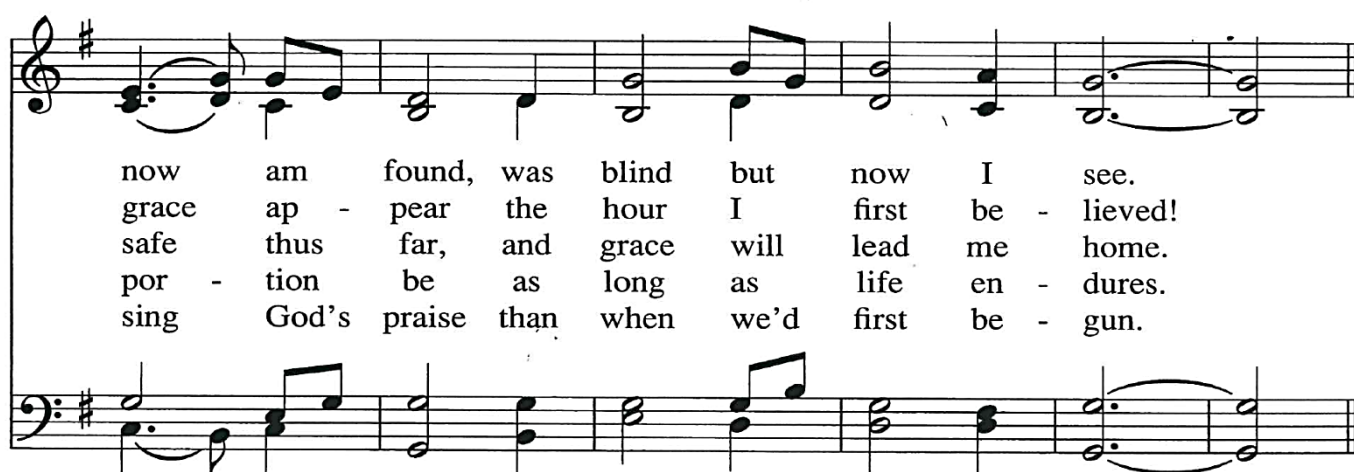
St. 5, A Collection of Sacred Ballads, 1790



1 A - maz - ing grace, how sweet the sound, that
 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and
 3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares, I
 4 My God has prom - ised good to me, whose
 5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright



saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but
 grace my fears re - lieved; How pre - cious did that
 have al - read - y come; 'Tis grace has brought me
 word my hope se - cures; God will my shield and
 shin - ing as the sun, We've no less days to



now am found, was blind but now I see.
 grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!
 safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
 por - tion be as long as life en - dures.
 sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

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Let Us Break Bread Together

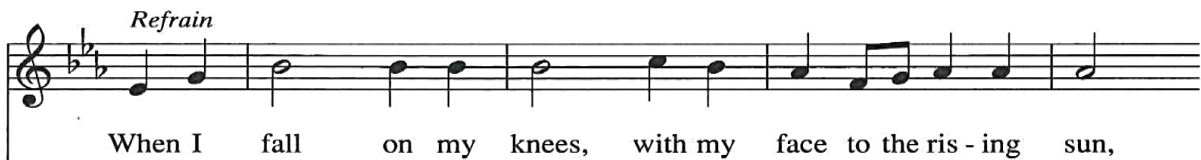
*Acts 2:42**African-American spiritual*


1 Let us break bread to - geth-er on our knees;
 * 2 Let us drink wine to - geth-er on our knees;
 3 Let us praise God to - geth-er on our knees;



let us break bread to - geth-er on our knees.
 let us drink wine to - geth-er on our knees.
 let us praise God to - geth-er on our knees.

Refrain



When I fall on my knees, with my face to the ris - ing sun,

HOLY COMMUNION



My God, have mer-cy on me.