



First Congregational

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

“Becoming a Blessing”

Rooted In Love

August 8, 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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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

“Swing Low, Sweet Chariot”
(Chuck Byam)

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Out of the depths I cry to you, O God:

Many: We hunger for the bread of life, O Jesus, and we thirst for you, O God.

One: O God, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!

Many: We hunger for the bread of life, O Jesus, and we thirst for you, O God.

One: There is forgiveness with you and I wait for you O God, my soul waits, for.

Many: We hunger for the bread of life, O Jesus, and we thirst for you, O God.

One: In your words I hope. My soul waits for you, God, more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning:

Many: We hunger for the bread of life, O Jesus, and we thirst for you, O God.

OPENING HYMN #472

“Precious Lord, Take My Hand”

(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: God of Healing and Transformation, we hunger and thirst for your abundant life. We bring you our sorrow and ask for the bread of joy; we bring you our despair and ask for the bread of hope; we bring you our weariness and ask for the bread of inspiration. Meet us here. We need the bread of heaven to sustain us for our journey to find our way, that we may be one with you. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Psalms 34:1-8 NRSV (pg. 497)

- ¹ I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
² My soul makes its boast in the LORD;
let the humble hear and be glad.
³ O magnify the LORD with me,
and let us exalt his name together.

⁴ I sought the LORD, and he answered me,
and delivered me from all my fears.
⁵ Look to him, and be radiant;
so your faces shall never be ashamed.
⁶ This poor soul cried, and was heard by the LORD,
and was saved from every trouble.
⁷ The angel of the LORD encamps
around those who fear him, and delivers them.
⁸ O taste and see that the LORD is good;
happy are those who take refuge in him.

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

Ephesians 4:25-5:2 NRSV (pg. 1066)

²⁵ So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. ²⁶ Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and do not make room for the devil. ²⁸ Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. ²⁹ Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. ³¹ Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, ³² and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. **5** ¹ Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, ² and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

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

Many: Thanks be to God.

HOMILY

“Becoming a Blessing”
(Rev. Dr. Laura Miller-Purrenhage)

MUSICAL REFLECTION

“Here I Am”
(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

(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

CLOSING HYMN #539

“Won't You Let Me Be Your Servant”

(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

“The Trumpet Will Sound”

(Chuck Byam)

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SUNDAY ROSTER

Liturgist – Lisa Reed

Fresh Perspective – Karen Holcomb-Merril

Homily – Rev. Dr. Laura Miller-Purrenhage

Virtual Coordinator –David Gruner

Music Coordinator – Linda Gooley

Pianist – Chuck Byam

Usher – Lisa Reed

Greeter – Pat Reed

Sound Board – Karen Walker

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

Won't You Let Me Be Your Servant?

539

Richard Gillard, 1977; alt.

Rom. 12:9-18; Col. 1:24-29

1 & 6 Won't you let me be your ser - vant, let me be as Christ to you?
 2 We are pil - grims on a jour - ney, we are trav - elers on the road;
 3 I will hold the Christ-light for you in the shad - ow of your fear;
 4 I will weep when you are weep - ing; when you laugh, I'll laugh with you.
 5 When we sing to God in heav - en we shall find such har - mo - ny,

Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my ser - vant, too.
 We are here to help each oth - er go the mile and bear the load.
 I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.
 I will share your joy and sor - row till we've seen this jour - ney through.
 Born of all we've known to - geth - er of Christ's love and ag - o - ny.

(repeat stanza 1)

Richard Gillard was born in England and later made his home in New Zealand. Largely self-taught, Gillard has described his musical style as "folk." This is the best known of his many songs in the United States.

Tune: SERVANT SONG 8.7.8.7.
 Richard Gillard, 1977
 Arr. Betty Carr Pulkingham, 1977; adapt.