



First Congregational

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

“Befriending Life Through Sponge cake”

September 5, 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
Volunteers, Office Administrator
Ben Sackett, Custodian
Rev. John Baumgartner, Pastor Emeritus

Darlene Banks, Bell Choir Director
Chuck Byam, Organist
Brandon Frost, Choir Director
Nicole Finney, Child Care

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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.*

If you are new to our church or do not receive email updates from us, please share your name and contact information with us by contacting us: office@grandledgeucc.org

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Hear the voice of the Beloved, who comes leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills;

Many: Our Beloved, like a gazelle or a young deer, stands behind our wall, gazing in at the windows, Beloved speaks and calls to us:

One: "Arise, my love, my dear one, and come away; for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.

Many: The flowers appear on the earth; The time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.

One: The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance.

Many: Arise, O love, O dear one, and join me."

OPENING HYMN

"Gather Us In"

(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

Many: Creator God, You have loved us passionately into being. We come today seeking your presence and to know we are your beloved!. Enter our sanctuary and enter our hearts that we may look into your loving gaze and see ourselves reflected there, as you see us. Let our love for you reflect and mirror your perfect love as we gather as your Beloved Community.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

FRESH PERSPECTIVES

Rev. Dr. Laura Miller-Purrenhage

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Song of Solomon 2: 8-13 NRSV (pg. 611)

8 The voice of my beloved! Look, he comes, leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills. 9 My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Look, there he stands behind our wall, gazing in at the windows, looking through the lattice. 10 My beloved speaks and says to me: "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; 11 for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. 12 The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. 13 The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

Galatians 5:22-23a NRSV (pg. 1062)

²² By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.

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

Many: Thanks be to God.

HOMILY

"Befriending Life Through Sponge Cake"

(Rev. Dr. Laura Miller-Purrenhage)

MUSICAL REFLECTION

"Come Unto Me, Ye Weary"

(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**

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: Dear God, you call us to be doers of the Word, not hearers only. You call us to love the world with your passion, and to let that love be expressed in justice, forgiveness, peace, and love. Forgive us when we let our fears prevent us from doing your will. Forgive us when we try to hide from our reality through substance abuse, through over-working, through fantasy, through all forms of escapism. Forgive us when our tempers take over and we act out in anger, cruelty, and spite. Forgive us when we honor you only with our lips and not with our actions. Amen.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

One: Dear Ones, remember that we come to this table today to affirm our covenant and sacred promise to be in loving relationship with God and with one another. So let this table remind you that, through Jesus, we have been shown the way into God's Beloved Community of mercy, love, and peace, in which God makes all things new. Jesus' example is here to follow, when you feel like you are faltering. So know that, in Christ, we are forgiven, reconciled, and given 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

SHARING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

THANKSGIVING PRAYER

One: Let us pray.

Many: God, we thank you for inviting us to, and nurturing us at, this table. Let this blessing fill us with hope, resilience, and a new outlook on life so that we may go forth from this table renewed, restored, and seeing the good in your world. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN #347

“Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ”

(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

“I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life”

(Chuck Byam)

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SUNDAY ROSTER

Liturgist – Anita Calcagno

Fresh Perspective – Rev. Dr. Laura Miller-Purrenhage

Homily – Rev. Dr. Laura Miller-Purrenhage

Virtual Coordinator – Thea Oatman

Sound Board – Karen Walker

Pianist/Organist – Chuck Byam

Hymn Singer – Karen Ramthun

Usher – Kim Dible

Greeter – Connie Dible

GATHER US IN
Mary Haugen

- Vs 1. Here in this place new light is streaming
Now is the darkness vanished away
See in this space our fears and our dreamings
Brought here to you in the light of this day
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken
Gather us in, the blind and the lame
Call to us now and we shall awaken
We shall arise at the sound of our name
- Vs 2. We are the young, our lives are a mystery
We are the old who yearn for your face
We have been sung throughout all of history
Called to be light to the whole human race
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty
Gather us in, the proud and the strong
Give us a heart so meek and so lowly
Give us the courage to enter the song
- Vs. 3 Here we will take the wine and the water
Here we will take the bread of new birth
Here you shall call your sons and your daughters
Call us anew to be salt for the earth
Give us to drink the wine of compassion
Give us to eat the bread that is you
Nourish us well and teach us to fashion
Lives that are holy and hearts that are true
- Vs. 4 Not in the dark of buildings confining
Not in some heaven light years away
But here in this place the new light is shining
Now is the kingdom, now is the day
Gather us in and hold us forever
Gather us in and make us your own
Gather us in, all peoples together
Fire of love in our flesh and our bones.
Fire of love in our flesh and our bones.

HOLY COMMUNION

347

Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ

Luke 10:1-9

Fred Kaan, 1975; alt.

C F G Dm G C G

1 Let us tal - ents and tongues em-ploy, reach-ing out with a shout of joy:
 2 Christ is a - ble to make us one, at his ta - ble he set the tone,
 3 Je - sus calls us in, sends us out bear - ing fruit in a world of doubt,

C F G Dm7 C G C

bread is bro - ken, the wine is poured, Christ is spo - ken and seen and heard.
 teach-ing peo - ple to live to bless, love in word and in deed ex - press.
 gives us love to tell, bread to share: God (Im-man - u - el) ev - ery-where!

Refrain (first time *p*, second time *f*)

C C7 F Dm G C F C

Je-sus lives a-gain, earth can breathe a-gain, pass the Word a-round: loaves a-bound!

This hymn came into being when composer Doreen Potter asked poet Fred Kaan to write a text for her adaptation of a Jamaican folk melody. It was first used at the World Council of Churches Assembly in Nairobi (1975), and in Vancouver (1983).

Tune: LINSTead L.M. with refrain
 Jamaican folk song
 Adapt. Doreen Potter, 1975