

Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ
1st Sunday After Epiphany
January 11, 2026

**** *Some rise to their feet, some rise in their hearts—please rise as you are able.*

GATHERING BELL

At the sound of the bell, please silence yourselves and prepare for worship.

PRELUDE

My Heart is Filled with Longing, J.S. Bach Ellen Bradley

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Dr. Paul Ashby

INVITATION TO WORSHIP

**Whoever you are...and wherever you are on
life's journey... you are welcome here!**

OPENING REFLECTION

CALL TO WORSHIP

Michael Petri

We are often taught to ignore our feelings.

And if ignoring your feelings does not work, try a little repression to push those feelings down.

But the Creator did not design robots – perhaps feelings give us energy and information we need.

The prophets spoke with feelings of anger over injustice, sadness about those suffering in poverty, and even tears over the destruction caused by selfish leaders.

The voice of God can speak through your feelings when those feelings are connected to compassion, faith, mercy and hope.

Help us to tune into the feelings that connect us to the heart of Jesus.

******HYMN NCH 42**

O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing

All

O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise.
The glories ever echoing the triumphs of God's grace.

My gracious Savior and my God, assist me to proclaim,
to spread through all the earth abroad the honors of your name.

Jesus! the name that calms our fears, that bids our sorrows cease
is music in the sinner's ears, is life, and health and peace!

Glory to God, and love and praise be ever, ever given
by all the saints in every age, the church in earth and heaven.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Paul

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Respond to each shared prayer request with "Peace, Shalom, Salaam."

PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

Our Creator, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO GIVE

Michael

OFFERTORY

Where the Promise Shines, Dunstan/Moore

Choir

When a star is shining over eastern hills, when the air is silent, and the clamor stills,
when the night is waiting, and the old hopes rise,
then the time has ripened and the heart grows wise.
Lead us on, lead us on, to a morning where the promise shines.

When the world is waiting for an unknown day, where a voice forgotten cries,
"Prepare the way!" Where an earthly power makes the heart turn cold,
there the gifts are offered – incense, myrrh, and gold.
Lead us on, lead us on, to a morning where the promise shines.

Lead us on, O Daystar, in the quiet night; guide us through the shadow with your
gentle light; show us in a manger our redemption's sign;
bring us to a morning where the promise shines.
Lead us on, lead us on, to a morning where the promise shines.

****DOXOLOGY (tune: *Tallis Canon*)

**Praise God who calls all humankind;
Praise Christ for loving ties that bind;
Praise Spirit making all things new;
One Love, One God, we honor you!**

****PRAYER OF DEDICATION

All

Creative Source of Life, You have blessed us with the capacity to love, to listen and to help. You have given us a vast range of feelings and perceptions. Guide us to use those feelings to create beauty rather than destruction, to manifest love even within the misery of life's problems, to work for mercy even when it offers us not a cent of material gain.

****HYMN 539

Won't You Let Me Be Your Servant

All

Won't you let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you?
Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant, too.

We are pilgrims on a journey, we are travelers on the road;
we are here to help each other go the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ-light for you in the shadow of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping; when you laugh, I'll laugh with you.
I will share your joy and sorrow till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together of Christ's love and agony. (repeat 1st verse)

SCRIPTURE

John 11:28-35, Luke 19:41-44

Michael

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house consoling her saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus began to weep.

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As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, "If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. Indeed, the days will come upon you when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you and hem you in on every side. They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God."

MESSAGE

"When the Preacher Makes Us Go to the Book Study..."

Paul

****HYMN NCH #391, VS 1,3,5 *In the Midst of New Dimensions*

All

In the midst of new dimensions, in the face of changing ways,
Who will lead the pilgrim peoples wandering in their separate ways?

Refrain

God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar,
We your people, ours the journey, now and ever, now and ever,
now and evermore.

As we stand a world divided by our own self-seeking schemes,
Grant that we, your global village, might envision wider dreams. *Refrain*

Should the threats of dire predictions cause us to withdraw in pain,
May your blazing phoenix spirit resurrect the church again. *Refrain*

****BENEDICTION

Paul

**** SONG BENEDICTION

World Peace Prayer

All

Lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth,
From despair to hope, from fear to trust.
Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace,
Let peace fill our hearts, let peace fill our world,
Let peace fill our universe!

GREETING ONE ANOTHER IN THE SPIRIT OF LOVE

RECESSIONAL

What Star is This, arr. Hal Hopson

Ellen

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