

Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ
Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost
September 17, 2023

*** 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

Now We Pray to the Holy Spirit, Buxtehude

Ellen Bradley

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. 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

Julie Krueger

We all like to think of ourselves as people of generosity.

We like to write checks to good causes that support compassion, service and goodness.
But what if generosity is much more than economic support? What if generosity is the practice of forgiveness?

I prefer to write a check.

Forgiveness can be difficult. We can even become attached to our pain and suffering. To let go of a debt might change us.

Why should we let others off the hook?

By holding painful grudges who really is on the hook?

Let us experience the freedom of forgiveness.

****HYMN Song Folder #20, vs 1,2,5**

The Summons

All

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known,
Will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare--- should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.
In your company I'll go----- where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

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.

CHOIR ANTHEM *For Everyone Born, Murray/Daw/Damon/Mann* Choir

INVITATION TO OFFERING Julie

OFFERTORY *Amazing Grace*, arr. John Carter Ellen

**DOXOLOGY *Know That God is Good* All

**Know that God is good. Know that God is good.
Know that God is good. God is good. God is good.**

**Hal-le, hal-le-lu-jah. Hal-le, hal-le-lu-jah.
Hal-le, hal-le-lu-jah. Hal-le-lu-jah. Hal-le-lu-jah.**

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION Julie

God of Grace, help us to grasp that we are loved and accepted just as we are... with all of our flaws. Let us taste the generosity that is the gift of forgiveness. Open our future to a generosity that is both giving and forgiving. Amen

**HYMN Song Folder #27, vs 1-3 *Put Peace Into Each Other's Hands* All

Put peace into each other's hands and like a treasure hold it;
protect it like a candle flame, with tenderness enfold it.

Put peace into each other's hands with loving expectation;
be gentle in your words and ways, in touch with God's creation.

Put peace into each other's hands, like bread we break for sharing;
look people warmly in the eye: our life is meant for caring.

SCRIPTURE *Matthew 6:9-15 & Luke 11:1-13* Julie

"Pray then in this way: Our Father 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 also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one. For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." He said to them, "When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial." And he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.' And he answers from within, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs. "So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to

give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

MESSAGE "What Comes One Verse after the Lord's Prayer?" Paul

**HYMN NCH 575 O for a World All

O for a world where everyone respects each other's ways,
Where love is lived and all is done with justice and with praise.

O for a world where goods are shared and misery relieved,
Where truth is spoken, children spared, equality achieved.

We welcome one world family and struggle with each choice
That opens us to unity and gives our vision voice.

The poor are rich, the weak are strong, the foolish ones are wise.
Tell all who mourn: outcasts belong, who perishes will rise.

O for a world preparing for God's glorious reign of peace,
Where time and tears will be no more, and all but love will cease.

**BENEDICTION Paul

** SUNG 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

Today's Worship Leaders

preacher	Rev. Dr. Paul Ashby
liturgist	Julie Krueger
musician	Ellen Bradley

Acknowledgements

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