

Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ
Antepenultimate Sunday Before Advent
November 9, 2025

**** *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

Wayfaring Stranger, arr Mark Hayes

Martha Jones

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

Nancy Palubicki

19th century evangelists defined salvation as something Jesus never asked anyone to do... accept Jesus as their personal savior. It was presented as easy belief and eternal fire insurance.

But what if salvation is letting go of self-hate and self-rejection?

What if salvation is liberation from greed and obsession with money?

What if salvation means we open our heart to justice, mercy and compassion?

Maybe salvation is being free from fear, greed, hate and that small self that tells us we are not good enough.

Save us from those who offer a personal savior who does not care about persons.

****HYMN vs 1 & 2 (see insert)

We Walk in Love

All

We walk in love united in purpose.

We join our hands and lift up one voice.

We speak the truth with strength and compassion
resounding with hope, with courage and joy.

We cry for peace and rights for all people.

We welcome friends from far and near.

We fight for those whose voices are silenced
resisting in faith until all are free.

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.

A MOMENT FOR STEWARDSHIP

Julie Krueger

DEDICATION OF PLEDGES

OFFERTORY

Dream God's Dream, Sirchio

Choir

The Congregation will be invited to sing the refrain after the 1st and 2nd verses.
The song is #120 in the *Sing! Prayer and Praise* hymnbook.

Dream God's dream! Holy Spirit help us dream of a world where there is justice
and where ev'ry one is free to build and grow and love,
and to simply have enough.

The world will change, when we dream God's dream.

****DOXOLOGY (*Lasst uns erfreuen*)

All

**Praise God, who makes all people one,
whose healing work is never done,
alleluia, alleluia;
who calls us steadfast to abide
in mercy at each other's side:
alleluia, alleluia,
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

****PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Nancy

God of transformations, open new doors for us to experience Your light of love. Help us to accept our acceptance. Liberate us from the fear, greed and hate that destroy the urge to be generous and caring. Let our gifts create a door for transformation into Your image. Amen

****HYMN (see insert)

I Come to You

All

I come to you, the lost and scattered;
I come to you, the smug and strong;
I come to you, the souls ungathered;
now come to me, learn you belong.

Refrain

Leave all you've done, I am forgiving;
leave all you've known to come and see;
leave all you've owned, you're just beginning;
leave all you've been and follow me.

I come to you, the disregarded;
I come to you, the scarred and shamed;
I come to you, the broken-hearted;
now come to me and be reclaimed. *refrain*

I come to you, the false and failing;
I come to you, the wild and worn;
I come to you, the wronged and railing;
now come to me, and be reborn. *refrain*

SCRIPTURE

Luke 19:1-10

Nancy

He entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today." So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look,

half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.” Then Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.”

MESSAGE “What Was Zaccheus Saved From?” Paul

****HYMN vs 3 (see insert) *We Walk in Love* All

We dream a world of justice and kindness.
We build a bridge creating new paths.
We march with joy as all walk together
embracing each one, we bold--ly stand.

****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 *Reprise of ‘We Walk in Love’, Witkowski* Martha

Today’s Worship Leaders

preacher	Rev. Dr. Paul Ashby
liturgist	Nancy Palubicki
musician	Martha Jones

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