

Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ
Twelfth Sunday After Pentecost
August 16, 2026

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

OPENING BELL

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

PRELUDE

Here I Am, Lord, Schutte/Linker

Joanne Specht & 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

Sophie Koontz

Our faith and patience are often tested

Bless us with the energy to live with patience and hope.

As we look to the future, too often we feel fear and anxiety about a list of issues.

**Free us from the temptations to apathy or despair. Grant us creative visions of how
compassion can heal our world.**

Let us dream dreams of greater realizations of mercy and caring.

Make us instruments of Your peace.

******HYMN**

Come, O Fount of Every Blessing

All

Come, O fount of every blessing, tune our hearts to sing your grace.
Streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of highest praise.
Teach us some melodious chorus sung by flaming tongues above,
telling all you offer for us: gifts of wisdom, joy, and love.

Here we raise to you an altar; you have brought us to this place.
May our footsteps never falter as we walk within your grace.
One in Christ, no longer strangers, we know joys that never cease,
trusting you in every danger we become a house of peace.

To your grace we live as debtors; to your name all praise is due!
Let your goodness, like a fetter bind our wandering hearts to you.
Prone to wander, how we feel it, yet you guide us in your way.
Take each heart, O take and seal it for your service day by day.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

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.**

SIXTY SECONDS FOR PERSONAL PRAYERS/CONTEMPLATION

INVITATION TO OFFERING

Sophie

OFFERTORY

Amazing Grace, arr. Hal Hopson

Ellen Bradley

****DOXOLOGY** (tune: *Lasst uns erfreuen*)

All

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below. Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

*****PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Sophie

God of mercy and grace, we celebrate how Jesus shared open-hearted forgiveness. When others picked up rocks to target those they judged, Jesus simply said those without sin throw the first rock. We seek that path of mercy and grace. Let our gifts be used to free us and others from self-judgement and fear. Let us awaken to a love that keeps no score cards of our flaws and failures. Amen

*****HYMN NCH 313**

Like a Tree Beside the Waters

All

Like a tree beside the waters, nurtured by your loving care,
We, O God, your sons and daughters, your enduring witness bear.
In each passing generation may your voice of love be heard.
Bless, we pray, this congregation with your holy, living Word.

Like a tree beside the river, drawing life from holy streams,
Fill us with your love forever; recreate our hopes and dreams.
Through the storms of life sustain us by the wisdom of your grace.
May the changing of the seasons find us in your warm embrace.

We, beside the living waters, drink from your eternal life.
Give to all, your sons and daughters, faith that rises over strife.
O — Living God, most glorious, strengthen us for life today.
By the hope of timeless promise guide your church upon the Way.

SCRIPTURE

James 1:2-5 (NRSVUE)

Sophie

My brothers and sisters, whenever you face various trials, consider it all joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance complete its work, so that you may be complete and whole, lacking in nothing.

If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you.

MESSAGE

"Temptations and the Tests of Life"

Paul

*****HYMN NCH #436, 1-2**

God of Grace and God of Glory

All

God of grace and God of glory, on your people pour your power;
Crown your ancient church's story; bring its bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the facing of this hour,
for the facing of this hour.

From the evils that surround us and assail the Savior's ways,
From the fears that long have bound us — free our hearts for faith and praise.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the living of these days,
For the living of these days.

****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

Rondeau, Mouret

Ellen

Today's Worship Leaders

preacher
liturgist
musicians

Rev. Dr. Paul Ashby
Sophia Koontz
Ellen Bradley, Joanne Specht

Acknowledgements

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