

Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ
Twenty-Fourth Sunday After Pentecost
November 12, 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

Great is Thy Faithfulness, arr Hayes

Martha Jones

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Paul Ashby

INVITATION TO WORSHIP

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

OPENING REFLECTION

Paul

CALL TO WORSHIP

Ellen Bradley

The self-aware person realizes our plans do not control the future.

Humility is the wisdom to realize the vast number of things we don't begin to understand.

Who knows how the future will unfold?

**We can do our part daily to protect the environment, recycle, vote for leaders who
support clean air and water.**

Open your heart to grasp that we are all part of God's ongoing evolution of life.

**Help us as a nation to see beyond the myths of the self-made man, the rugged
individualist, the Lone Ranger, who was not a lone ranger.**

Every breath is a gift of creation.

Every day is a gift on our journey.

****HYMN NCH 401**

O God in Whom All Life Begins (tune: Ellacombe)

All

O God in whom all life begins, who births the seed to fruit,
bestow your blessing on our lives; here let your love find root.
Bring forth in us the Spirit's gifts of patience, joy, and peace;
deliver us from numbing fear, and grant our faith increase.

Unite in mutual ministry our minds and hands and hearts
that we may have the grace to seek the power your peace imparts.
So let our varied gifts combine to glorify your Name
that in all things by word and deed we may your love proclaim.

Through tears and laughter, grief and joy, enlarge our trust and care;
so bind us in community that we may risk and dare.
Be with us when we gather here to worship, sing, and pray,
then send us forth in power and faith to live the words we say.

MOMENT FOR STEWARDSHIP

Marie Koontz and Children

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Paul

COLLECTION OF PLEDGES

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

DEDICATION OF PLEDGES, 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 OFFERING

Ellen

OFFERTORY

Here Am I, Daman/Haas

Choir and Laura Bradley, cello

****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**

Ellen

Holy One, enable us to see that our faith calls us not to escape this earth but to live fully on this earth. As we dedicate our gifts let them be used to help those who struggle, those who carry grief, those who wrestle with hunger to live more fully. Let our blessings be used to bless others. Amen

SCRIPTURE

1st Thessalonians 4:13-17, Mark 13:32-35, James 4:13-17

Ellen

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever.

"But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn.

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a town and spend a year there, doing business and making money." Yet you do not even know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wishes, we will live and do this or that." As it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. Anyone, then, who knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, commits sin.

****HYMN Song Folder #16**

The Lone, Wild Bird

All

The lone, wild bird in lofty flight is still with you, nor leaves your sight.
And I am yours! I rest in you, Great Spirit, come, rest in me, too.

The ends of earth are in your hand, the sea's dark deep and far-off land.
And I am yours! I rest in you, Great Spirit, come, rest in me, too.

Each secret thought is known to you, the path I walk my whole life through;
My days, my deeds, my hopes, my fears, my deepest joys, my silent tears.

In secret depths you knit my frame, before my birth you spoke my name;
Within my soul, as close as breath, so near to me, in life, in death.

O search me, God, my heart reveal, renew my life, my spirit heal;
For I am yours, I rest in you, Great Spirit, come, rest in me, too.

MESSAGE "Those Who Have God Figured Out ... Are Nuts!" Paul

**HYMN NCH #423, vs 1 & 2 Great Is Your Faithfulness All

Great is your faithfulness, O God, Creator;
With you no shadow of turning we see;
You do not change, your compassions, they fail not;
All of your goodness forever will be.

Great is your faithfulness! Great is your faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed your hand has provided.
Great is your faithfulness, God, unto me!

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To your great faithfulness, mercy, and love.

**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	Ellen Bradley
greeters	Barbara Eyler, Jean Yale
musicians	Martha Jones, Laura Bradley

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