

Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ
Second Sunday of Lent
March 5, 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

*Meditation on 'Ubi Caritas' arr. Wagner
Where charity and love are, God is there.*

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

Nancy Palubicki

The image of Jesus on most ancient cathedrals is that of a stern, harsh Judge...

Yet Jesus was a loving and forgiving person who welcomed everyone.

Medieval works of art often reflect God or Jesus marching the masses to a hell realm.

But Jesus fed the masses, healed the sick and never told anyone to "go to hell."

Somewhere the story was changed from divine love to fear.

**Open our hearts, minds and bodies to the gift of divine love revealed from the first spark
of the Big Bang of creation.**

**HYMN NCH 388, vs 1 - 3

Help Us Accept Each Other

All

Help us accept each other as Christ accepted us;
teach us as sister, brother, each person to embrace.
Be present, God, among us, and bring us to believe
we are ourselves accepted and meant to love and live.

Teach us, O God, your lessons, as in our daily life
we struggle to be human and search for hope and faith.
Teach us to care for people, for all, not just for some,
to love them as we find them, or as they may become.

Let your acceptance change us, so that we may be moved
in living situations to do the truth in love;
to practice your acceptance, until we know by heart
the table of forgiveness and laughter's healing art.

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 God, 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

Nancy

OFFERTORY

Come to the Water, Foley/Hasseler

Choir

****DOXOLOGY** (tune: *Old Hundredth*)

All

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

****PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Nancy

Holy One, connect our hearts to love. Reveal to us how to walk the path of Christ-like compassion. We acknowledge, the church is not a building but people who gather to learn the many ways of compassion so that they may be shared inside and outside this building. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

John 3:1-17

Nancy

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? "Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

MESSAGE

"Making Sense of Love"

Paul

****HYMN NCH 23***There's a Wideness in God's Mercy*

All

There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea.
 There's a kindness in God's justice, which is more than liberty.
 There is no place where earth's sorrows are more felt than in God's heaven.
 There is no place where earthly failings have such kindly judgment given.

For the love of God is broader than the measures of the mind.
 And the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.
 If our love were but more faithful, we would gladly trust God's word,
 and our lives would show thanksgiving for the goodness of our God.

COMMUNION

****HYMN NCH 388, vs 4***Help Us Accept Each Other*

All

God, for today's encounters with all who are in need,

who hunger for acceptance, for righteousness and bread,
Bring us new eyes for seeing, new hands for holding on;
renew us with your Spirit; God! Free us, make us one!

****BENEDICTION**

Paul

****SUNG BENEDICTION**

Beyond the Days, refrain

All

Beyond the days of hope and mystery we see a light of faith renewed,
and in our longing we thirst for guidance to walk with you day by day,
to walk with you day by day.

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Today's Worship Leaders

preacher
liturgist
musician

Rev. Dr. Paul Ashby
Nancy Palubicki
Martha Jones

FCUCC Staff

senior pastor revpaulashby@yahoo.com
office administrator office@uccgj.org
music coordinator
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Rev. Paul Ashby
Beth Rakestraw
Martha Jones
Karen Caton
Matu Hedwall
Nancy Palubicki & Martha Jones

Pastoral Care

To call Pastor Paul:

- **His cell phone, 970-793-8638. [Paul prefers calls over texts]**
- *His extension at church, 970-242-0298, x104.*
- *Home landline, 970-200-2668. [Paul is always up until midnight, do not be shy about calling late when there is need.]*

To share a prayer request with the congregation, contact Beth Rakestraw, office@uccgj.org or 970-242-0298 x 105. **Deadline for publishing in the Sunday bulletin is Thursday noon.**

This Week at FCUCC
March 5 – March 12, 2023

Sunday 5	8:45 Choir Rehearsal	sanctuary
	10:00 Worship w/ Communion	sanctuary/YouTube
	11:00 Happy Hour	gathering space
Tuesday 7	10:00 Women's Coffee	gathering space
	10:00 Men's Coffee	library
	5:30 Cantabile Ringers	music room
Thursday 9	12:15 Health & Wellness	chapel
Friday 10	10:00 Zoom Coffee Hour	zoom
Saturday 11	Daylight Savings Time Begins Spring your clocks forward 1 hour before bed time	
Sunday 12	8:45 Choir Rehearsal	sanctuary
	10:00 Worship w/ Communion	sanctuary/YouTube
	11:00 Happy Hour	pilgrim hall
	11:15 Worship & Celebration Team	library

Church office hours: Monday through Thursday, 9:00 to 3:00.

Save the Dates:

April 2 | Palm/Passion Sunday

April 9 | Easter

May 2 – 11 | GJHS AP Testing at Church, Various Rooms

June 15 –17 | RMC Annual Celebration in Grand Junction

December 3 | First Sunday of Advent

Connections & Collections

Contact: Beth Rakestraw, Office Administrator, office@uccgj.org

Want more information about church events? Contact Beth to sign up for church newsletters.

Connections ...

Guest WiFi Access | The name of our guest WiFi is FCUCCguest; the password is “welcomeall.”

Join us for Coffee after worship | You must be current on Covid vaccinations to join us for social events. Persons with underlying health conditions are encouraged to mask for indoor events.

Make Mondays Fun | People gather together to work on individual and group art projects in a friendly atmosphere. The sunflower display in the church hallway was one of their projects; so were the acrylic pours that are on the other side of the hall way.

Berna B's | This is a group of women who meet once a month on the third Thursday at 11:30 for lunch out at Berna B's Café near the Safeway at the corner of 29th and Patterson. All are welcome.

Collections ...

Catholic Outreach | Bottled salad dressings!

Solidarity, Not Charity | hotel and personal size toiletries, water/milk jugs with their lids and plastic grocery bags (more bang for your dime!)

Mission & Outreach First Quarter | Trail Lamp | multimedia paper, painter's tape, watercolor markers, and art markers.

Helping Handbags | Donate a purse, donate things you'd like to see in your purse (cosmetics, snacks, personal care items, spare change, etc), donate a handbag filled with things. Please leave things in the box on the shelves by the office.

What's New?

Choir begins rehearsals at 8:45 am starting TODAY. | We welcome new singers! Contact Karen Caton with questions.

Fellowship of the Grape [FOG] | Friday, March 10 | 5:00 pm | At the home of Linda Randolph & Julie Krueger, 2655 Liberty View Drive. Please bring a Merlot or a Riesling, and a side dish to go with chicken vegetable soup.

Youth Event at Avalon Theater | Monday, March 13 | 7:30 pm | Pam and Paul are hosting a youth event on the 13th at The Avalon, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary by showing classic movies that played there. The Monday March 13th movie is King Kong. Let Paul know since tickets need to be purchased in advance. The Avalon predicts it will sell out.