

Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ
Another Sunday after Pentecost
September 7, 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

Allegro from Sonatina, Op. 20, No. 1, Friedrich Kuhlau

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

It is written by St. Francis de Sales that the road to hell is paved with good intentions.

Yes, but the path to God is also paved with good intentions.

It is a vital task to explore our inner motivations and hopes.

We pray for intentions that guide us toward greater faith, hope and love.

May the goodness and God-ness in our consciousness guide us on the path of compassion.

Bless us with the gift that transforms good intentions into positive actions.

******HYMN**

Come, O Fount of Every Blessing (words adapted by Ruth Duck)

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

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.

INVITATION TO OFFERING

Julie

OFFERTORY

Gift of Love, arr. Hal Hopson

Choir

****DOXOLOGY (*Old Hundredth*)

All

**Praise God, whose love will never cease,
whose justice raises up the least
and sits all creatures at the feast—
God's mercy is our hope and peace!**

****PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Julie

Loving God, accept our gifts as expressions of our faith, our hope and our love. Use us and our gifts to bring the changes for good that you intend for our world. Amen

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 5:20-24; Matthew 6:1-6 [NRSVUE]

Julie

“For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not murder,’ and ‘whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment, and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council, and if you say, ‘You fool,’ you will be liable to the hell of fire. So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.”

“Beware of practicing your righteousness before others in order to be seen by them, for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

MESSAGE

“Good Intentions”

Paul

****HYMN NCH 497, vs 1,2,4

Guide My Feet

All

Guide my feet while I run this race (*repeat twice*)
For I don't want to run this race in vain.

Hold my hand while I run this race (*repeat twice*)
For I don't want to run this race in vain.

Stand by me while I run this race (*repeat twice*)
For I don't want to run this race in vain.

CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION (Gluten free options are available.)
All are welcome who practice the way of compassion.

Paul

****HYMN

Company of Stumblers (tune: *Aurelia*)

All

The church's one foundation is moving with the flock,
the Christ, not held in structures, this boat, not moored in dock.
The future seems uncertain; the past, her vision wild.
We break the bread together and feed her like your child.

When we come to the crossroads, not knowing what's ahead.
We weigh up all the outcomes, of where we might be led.
We wait in anxious stillness amid the pending strife.
Your Spirit whispers gently, "Just choose the path of life."

For we are all God's servants, we're pilgrims on the way --
a company of stumblers made from a common clay.
We'll seek the path of justice, the trail that leads to life,
the road of loving-kindness, where all might know the Christ.

****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

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, arr. Springer

Ellen

Today's Worship Leaders

preacher
liturgist
musician

Rev. Dr. Paul Ashby
Julie Krueger
Ellen Bradley

Acknowledgements

Unless otherwise noted, the following music is reprinted and/or included in the worship recording with permission through OneLicense #A-709231. All rights reserved. All other music in public domain. The offertory song is not included in today's recording.

The doxology words are by Rev. Dr. Mary Luti, published in *Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow: Doxologies for the Church* by The God Is Still Speaking® Writers Group of the United Church of Christ © 2024.

- ◇ *Come, O Fount of Every Blessing*. Words adapted by Ruth Duck © 2014, Hope Publishing Co.
- ◇ The Gift of Love, Music: O Waly, Waly, an American folk tune. Words based on 1st Corinthians 13. This arr. by Hal Hopson © 1972, Hope Publishing Co.
- ◇ Guide My Feet. Traditional Negro spiritual, arrangement by Joyce Finch Johnson © 1992, The Pilgrim Press.
- ◇ Music during communion: *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing* and *On Jordan's Stormy Banks*. Arr. Cindy Berry © 2009 Aldred Music Publishing Co., Inc.
- ◇ *Company of Stumblers*. Words: Jennie Gordon 2023. Permission for use in worship with acknowledgement.
- ◇ *Lead Us from Death to Life (World Peace Prayer)*. Words of refrain by Satish Kumar. Tune by Marty Haugen © 1985 GIA Publications, Inc.