

Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ
Eleventh Sunday After Pentecost
August 9, 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

Meditation 1: Prelude to Quiet, Mark Kellner

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

Linda Randolph

In the dance of life, we often step on other's feet ...

Sometimes it is just a mistake, other times we try to cause trouble for others.

Let us seek the way of good trouble- creating barriers to cruelty and injustice.

There are times when protests must trespass and occupy space when people are treated worse than animals.

We pray for forgiveness of our trespasses when we harm others from unthinking actions.

We also pray to give us the courage to trespass where our neighbors are being harmed, abused or imprisoned. Grant us the wisdom to know when its Your will to trespass.

**HYMN SPP 123

Draw the Circle Wide

All

Refrain

Draw the circle wide. Draw it wider still.

Let this be our song, no one stands alone,
Standing side by side, draw the circle wide.

God the still point of the circle, 'round whom all creation turns;
Nothing lost, but held forever, in God's gracious arms. *refrain*

Let our hearts touch far horizons, so encompass great and small;
Let our loving know no borders, faithful to God's call. *refrain*

Let the dreams we dream be larger than we've ever dreamed before;
Let the dream of Christ be in us, opening every door. *refrain*

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

Linda

OFFERTORY

Meditation 5: Forgiveness, Mark Kellner

Martha

****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**

Linda

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 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's no place where earthly sorrows are more felt than in God's heaven.
There's 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.

SCRIPTURE

John 21:15-19, Matthew 18:21-22 (NRSVUE)

Linda

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me."

Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

MESSAGE

"Debts, Trespasses, Sins and Assorted Fowl-Ups"

Paul

****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.

****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

RECESSIONAL

Reprise of 'Draw the Circle Wide', Light

Martha

Today's Worship Leaders

preacher
liturgist
musician

Rev. Dr. Paul Ashby
Linda Randolph
Martha Jones

Acknowledgements

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Pastoral Care

Let Paul know if you want to bring a sandwich and have lunch | This is an ongoing opportunity to discuss with Paul any joy or concern in depth, or anything in the news that weighs on you. **Paul is available Monday, Wednesday and Friday from noon to 1 pm each week, or Saturday if you work during the week, or by appointment.** Paul's email is revpaulashby@yahoo.com. To call Pastor Paul:

- His cell phone, 970-793-8638.
- 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.]