

Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ
Thirteenth Sunday After Pentecost
August 27, 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

Be Thou My Vision, C. Maxwell Reilly

Max Reilly

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

Ellen Bradley

What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus?

It has to be more than flag waving nationalism.

What does it mean to walk in the steps of Jesus?

It is the courage to actually do what Jesus did.

Do not settle for dogmas or right-wing definitions of family values that Jesus never taught. Dare to live a life of compassion.

Let us find the heartbeat of compassion within our own heart's rhythm.

**HYMN Song Folder #20, vs 1,2,5

The Summons

All

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?

Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?

Will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known,

Will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?

Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?

Will you risk the hostile stare--- should your life attract or scare?

Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.

Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.

In your company I'll go----- where your love and footsteps show.

Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

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

Ellen

OFFERTORY

In Bright Mansions Above, arr K. Lee Scott

Pam Gregory and Max

**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

**God of Jesus, grant us the courage to follow the way of Christ-like compassion. Let our soul sing the songs of love and life that bring healing where there is brokenness and hope where there is despair. Let hope be our passion in an era of apathy and indifference.
Amen**

HYMN NCH 497, vs 1,2,4

Guide My Feet

All

Guide my feet Hold my hand . . . Stand by me . . .
For I don't want to run this race in vain.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 16:13-18 and Matthew 10:24-31

Ellen

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.

A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household! "So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

MESSAGE

"Counting the Cost of Discipleship"

Paul

HYMN NCH 495, VS 1,3,4

Called as Partners in Christ's Service

All

Called as partners in Christ's service, called to ministries of grace,
We respond with deep commitment fresh new lines of faith to trace.
May we learn the art of sharing, side by side and friend with friend,
Equal partners in our caring to fulfill God's chosen end.

Thus new patterns for Christ's mission, in a small or global sense,
Help us bear each other's burdens, breaking down each wall or fence.
Words of comfort, words of vision, words of challenge, said with care,
Bring new power and strength for action, make us colleagues, free and fair.

So God grant us for tomorrow ways to order human life
That surround each person's sorrow with a calm that conquers strife.

Make us partners in our living, our compassion to increase,
Messengers of faith, thus giving hope and confidence and peace.

****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
liturgist
musician

Rev. Dr. Paul Ashby
Ellen Bradley
Max Reilly

Acknowledgements

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Nancy Palubicki & Martha Jones

Pastoral Care

Bring a sandwich and have lunch with Paul | 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**