

**Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ
Yet Another Sunday After Pentecost
October 19, 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

Salley Gardens, arr. Larry Shackley

Martha Jones

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Dr. 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

Andrea Bartlett

Justice is seldom achieved without struggle.

Congregationalist leaders opposed slavery for 163 years before the Emancipation Proclamation.

In the Bible, the Persistent Widow demanded justice. She is a role model for all who work for greater mercy on this earth.

We are prone to give up after a couple protests. We often feel too small, too powerless to make any difference.

But the Persistent Widow never lost hope in the day when right would overcome might.

Grant us the hope that never gives up. Inspire our faith in the joyful realization that mercy and justice heal our brokenness.

****HYMN Sing! Prayer & Praise #26

You Are Welcome Here

All

refrain

You are welcome here, no matter who you are,

no matter where you are, on life's journey.

You are welcome here, no matter who you are.

Come and join with us. We're united in the church of Christ.

Come now all people, join in the song, come be a part of the family of God.

We are God's people and you belong, share in the joy of Christ. *refrain*

We pray for justice; we pray for peace; we hear the word of the Savior of all.

We find God's mercy; we find release, sharing the joy of Christ. *refrain*

Lifting each other; doing what's right; standing together, whatever may come;

praising our Savior, shining our light, sharing the joy of Christ. *refrain*

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.

OFFERTORY

Gather Us In, Haugen/Larsen

Choir

****DOXOLOGY (*Lasst uns erfreuen*)

All

**Praise God, who makes all people one,
 whose healing work is never done,
 alleluia, alleluia;
 who calls us steadfast to abide
 in mercy at each other's side:
 alleluia, alleluia,
 alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

****PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Andrea

God of Justice, use our gifts to spread the work of mercy. Even if we feel little or afraid we remember You give us strength to keep going. You equip us for every good work. You awaken our conscience with every act of kindness. You open human hearts to embrace the way of justice. Amen

****HYMN Sing! Prayer & Praise #13

Love and Justice

All

Love and justice, peace and pow'r, show us how to live each hour,
 raise us up and set us free, show us how to live and be.

Love and Justice, peace and pow'r, challenge us to give each hour,
 raise us up and set us free, help us be all we can be.

Tell your neighbors; tell your friends, here's a place hope never ends.
 Love and justice, peace and pow'r! God is with us in this hour!
 God is with us in this hour! God is with us in this hour!

SCRIPTURE

Luke 18:1-8

Andrea

Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my accuser.' For a while he refused, but later he said to himself, 'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.' " And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

MESSAGE

" A UCC Saint... The Persistent Widow "

Paul

**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*

****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 on *Draw the Circle Wide*

Martha

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Today's Worship Leaders

preacher
liturgist
musician

Rev. Dr. Paul Ashby
Andrea Bartlett
Martha Jones