

Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ
Ninth Sunday after Pentecost
August 17, 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

Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit, arr John Carter

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

Betsy McLoughlin

Happiness can be hard to find. Most of us do not know what will provide lasting happiness.

**We admit we have thought that the right house or right car or right jobs or right
accomplishments would guarantee permanent joy. It did not work out that way.**

In a world of unlimited wants and limited resources where can we discover happiness?

**True happiness is often a quiet visitor that enters our heart without fanfare. True
happiness comes with acceptance, letting go, welcoming the goodness of this moment.**

May we find our own unique road to a happy life.

May we discover the gift of peace that is an experience of simplicity and contentment.

**** **HYMN NCH 89**

Awake, Awake to Love and Work

All

Awake, awake to love and work! The lark is in the sky;
the fields are wet with diamond dew; the worlds awake to cry
their praises to the Fount of Life; Christ Jesus passes by.

Come, let your voice be one with theirs, shout with their shout of praise;
See how the giant sun soars up, God's gift for all your days!
So let the love of Jesus come and set your soul ablaze.

To give and give, and give again, as God's own grace is free;
To spend yourself nor count the cost; to serve most gloriously
the God who gave all worlds that are, and all that are to be.

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

Betsy

OFFERTORY

Morning Song, arr Justin McCarthy

Martha

****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

Betsy

God of peace, enable us to discover a sense of peace and inner contentment. Teach us the ways of generosity not because we are rich but because sharing provides meaning and joy. May these gifts be used to support the ways of peace and justice in our church and community. Amen

**HYMN NCH #563

We Cannot Own the Sunlit Sky

All

We cannot own the sunlit sky, the moon, the wildflowers growing,
for we are part of all that is within life's river flowing,
With o-pen hands receive and share the gift of God's creation,
that all may have abundant life in every earthly nation.

When bodies shiver in the night and, weary, wait for morning,
when children have no bread but tears, and war horns sound their warning,
God calls humanity to wake, to join in common labor,
that all may have abundant life in oneness with their neighbor.

God calls humanity to join as partners in creating
a future free from want or fear, life's goodness celebrating.
That new world beacons from afar, invites our shared endeavor,
that all may have abundant life and peace endure forever.

SCRIPTURE

Luke 12:13-21 [NRSVUE]

Betsy

Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." But he said to him, "Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?" And he said to them, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." Then he told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?' Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God."

MESSAGE

"If I Win the Lottery"

Paul

****HYMN NCH 562

Take My Gifts and Let Me Love You

All

Take my gifts and let me love you, God who first of all loved me,
Gave me light and food and shelter, gave me life and set me free,
Now because your love has touched me, I have love to give away,
Now the bread of love is rising, loaves of love to multiply!

Take the fruit that I have gathered from the tree your Spirit sowed,
Harvest of your own compassion, juice that makes the wine of God,
Spiced with humor, laced with laughter – flavor of the Jesus life,
Tang of risk and new adventure, taste and zest beyond belief.

Take whatever I can offer – gifts that I have yet to find,
Skills that I am slow to sharpen, talents of the hand and mind,
Things made beautiful for others in the place where I must be:
Take my gifts and let me love you, God who first of all loved me.

****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 'Talavera Terrace,' tune by Colin Gibson

Martha

Today's Worship Leaders

preacher
liturgist
musician

Rev. Dr. Paul Ashby
Betsy McLoughlin
Martha Jones

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 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.

- ◇ *Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit. African American Spiritual*, setting by John Carter © 1990, Hope Publishing Company.
- ◇ *Awake, Awake to Love and Work*. Tune: Tune harm. by C. Winfred Douglas © 1940, Church Publishing Inc.
- ◇ *We Cannot Own the Sunlit Sky*. Words by Ruth Duck © 1983, rev. 1992 by GIA Publications, Inc.
- ◇ *Morning Song*. Arr. Justin McCarthy © 2006, GIA Publications, Inc.
- ◇ *Take My Gifts*. Tune: *Talavera Terrace*, Colin Gibson, 1991. Text: Shirley Erena Murray, 1991. Tune and text © 1992, Hope Publishing Co.
- ◇ *Lead Us from Death to Life (World Peace Prayer)*. Words of refrain by Satish Kumar. Tune by Marty Haugen © 1985 GIA Publications, Inc.