

Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ
Fourth Sunday of Easter
April 26, 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

My Shepherd is the Living God, 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

Jeffrey Loudon

Sometimes I feel all alone in an uncaring universe.

The Lord is my shepherd.

My to-do list is never done.

God helps me to rest in green pastures and backyards; God leads me beside the quiet rivers that flow through the desert. A glimpse of the Eternal restores my soul.

We can face valleys where the shadows of death eclipse all light and shroud our hope.

But I am not overcome with fear; for the Creator points me toward life. The Creator guides me to places of compassion and comfort. Surely grace and lovingkindness will be on my path all the days of my life even when my first thought is I feel all alone. In life, in death, I dwell in the heart of God.

****HYMN Song Folder #10

Come and Find the Quiet Center

All

Come and find the quiet center in the crowd-ed life we lead,
find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed;
Clear the chaos and the clutter, clear our eyes that we can see,
all the things that really matter, be at peace, and simply be.

Silence is a friend who claims us, cools the heat and slows the pace,
God it is who speaks and names us, knows our being, touches base,
making space with-in our thinking, lifting shades to show the sun,
raising courage when we're shrinking, finding scope for faith begun.

In the spirit let us travel, open to each other's pain,
let our loves and fears unravel, celebrate the space we gain;
There's a place for deepest dreaming, there's a time for heart to care,
in the spirit's lively scheming there is always room to spare.

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.

SIXTY SECONDS FOR PERSONAL PRAYERS/SILENT CONTEMPLATION

INVITATION TO OFFERING

Jeffrey

OFFERTORY

Your Song of Love, Bob Fabing

Choir

****DOXOLOGY

Hal-le, hal-le hal-le-lu-ja.

All

****PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Jeffrey

Shepherd of love and light, remind us that all of life is a prayer. Plants, animals, stars and human voices join in the symphony of Creation. We each reach toward our source of Being. From our first grasping breath of birth until death takes our last exhalation, everything we have is from the divine flow of creation. For this gift of breath, we offer our gifts. Amen.

****HYMN NCH 247

My Shepherd is the Living God

All

My shepherd is the living God, I therefore nothing need;
In pastures fair, near pleasant streams you settle me to feed.
You bring my wandering spirit back when I forsake your ways,
and lead me for your mercy's sake in paths of truth and grace.

When I walk through the shades of death, your presence is my stay;
A word of your supporting breath drives all my fears away,
Your hand, in sight of all my foes, does still my table spread;
my cup with blessings overflows, your oil anoints my head.

The sure provisions of my God attend me all my days;
O may your house be my abode, and all my work be praise.
There would I find a settled rest, while others come and go—
No more a stranger or a guest, but like a child at home.

SCRIPTURE

Psalms 23

Jeffrey

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
You make me lie down in green pastures;
You lead me beside still waters, and restore my soul.
You lead me in right paths for your name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil,
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

MESSAGE

"Fear No Evil"

Paul

****HYMN SPP 213

Wherever You Go

All

Wherever you go, God is with you; wherever you go, God is there.
Wherever you go, whatever you do, you are in God's care.

Wherever we go, God is with us; wherever we go, God is there.
Wherever we go, whatever we do, we are in God's care.

****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

The Love of God, Lehman/Shackley

Martha

Today's Worship Leaders

preacher
liturgist
musicians

Rev. Dr. Paul Ashby
Jeffrey Louden
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.]