

Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ
Thirteenth Sunday After Pentecost
August 23, 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 *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* (based on *Beecher*), Don Hustad Ellen Bradley

ANNOUNCEMENTS Beth Rakestraw

INVITATION TO WORSHIP **Whoever you are...and wherever you are on
life's journey... you are welcome here!**

OPENING REFLECTION

CALL TO WORSHIP (Based upon Psalm 138) Sandra Holloway

We give you thanks, O God, with our whole hearts; before the gods we sing your praise;
**We give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness, for you have
exalted your name and your word above everything.**
On the day we called, you answered us; you increased our strength of soul.
**Though we walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve us against the wrath of our
enemies;**
You stretch out your hand, and your right hand delivers us.
The Holy One will fulfill their purpose for us;
your steadfast love, O God, endures forever.
Do not forsake the work of your hands.

**** **HYMN NCH 39** *Creator God We Sing* All

Creator God we sing, a hymn of joy we're making;
our grateful love we bring, as the new day's light is breaking.
God made the sea and land; the sun and stars came rolling
from God's own loving hand, their Creator's love extolling.
Alleluia, alleluia! Creator God we sing: Alleluia!

Creator God we sing, your power and wisdom blessing;
our hope and wonder bring, admiration now expressing.
The universe maintains that God in might is dwelling;
and we, in humble strains, of God's beauty here are telling.
Alleluia, alleluia! Creator God we sing: Alleluia!

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE Beth

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

Sandra

OFFERTORY

Eamonn a' Chnuic (Ned of the Hill), Ilse de Ziah

Laura Bradley

**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

Sandra

Gracious, generous God, receive these gifts as a deposit into your desired realm as an act of trust and gratitude. May these offerings provide for the needs of our neighbors and enable this faith community to offer ministry in your name and your honor. Amen.

**HYMN NCH #423, vs 1 & 2

Great Is Your Faithfulness

All

Great is your faithfulness, O God, Creator;
With you no shadow of turning we see;
You do not change, your compassions, they fail not;
All of your goodness forever will be.

Great is your faithfulness! Great is your faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed your hand has provided.
Great is your faithfulness, God, unto me!

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To your great faithfulness, mercy, and love. *refrain*

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 16:13-20; Luke 6:46

Sandra

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 Abba 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. I will give you the keys of the realm of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I tell you?"

MESSAGE

"Who Do YOU Say That I Am"

Beth

***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

Beth

**** SONG 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

Recessional, Joseph Raff

Ellen

Today's Worship Leaders

preacher
liturgist
musicians

Beth Rakestraw
Sandra Holloway
Ellen Bradley, Laura Bradley

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