

Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ
Third Sunday of Lent
March 8, 2026

**** *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

A Lenten Psalm, Wihla Huston

Ellen Bradley

ANNOUNCEMENTS/MOMENT FOR MINISTRY

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

Sandy Holloway

Too often we let fear do the talking.

Fear is the path to the dark side.

Fear leads to anger.

Anger leads to hate.

Hate leads to suffering.

We see the fear expressed against the outsider, the immigrant, those who have darker skin.

We witness the anger of those who are afraid their culture is not like the 1950's.

We hear the lies that create suffering for the Samaritans of today, who are living in Ohio and Minneapolis.

Let the heart of Jesus cast out the fear that burns with anger giving birth to hatred and suffering.

Help us to see beyond the shadows of fear that we may encounter the light of love.

HYMN, Song Folder #2, vs 1 & 2

All Are Welcome

All

Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hope and dreams and vision, rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:
all are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where prophets speak, and words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to seek to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness and as symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:
all are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

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.

---60 Seconds for Personal Prayers and Silent Contemplation---

INVITATION TO OFFERING

Sandy

OFFERTORY

Sing a New Song to the Lord, Sleeth/Shafferman

Choir

****DOXOLOGY (tune: *Old Hundredth*)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise God all creatures here below.

Praise God for all that love has done.

Creator, Christ, and Spirit One. Amen.

****PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Sandy

God of all people, help us to discover our true unity with all humanity. Through following the truth of genetics, we see our biological unity. Through following the truth of our hearts, we realize that love liberates us to awaken to the beauty of others. Let our mission be a sledgehammer to break down walls of fear and racism. Amen

****HYMN Song Folder #11

Healer of Our Every Ill

All

Refrain

Healer of our every ill, light of each tomorrow,

Give us peace beyond our fear, and hope beyond our sorrow.

You who know our fears and sadness, grace us with your peace and gladness;

Spirit of all comfort, fill our hearts. *refrain*

In the pain and joy beholding how your grace is still unfolding,

give us all your vision, God of love. *refrain*

Give us strength to love each other, every sister, every brother;

Spirit of all kindness, be our guide. *refrain*

SCRIPTURE

John 4:5-19, 25-29

Sandy

So Jesus came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet.

The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?" Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?"

MESSAGE *"The Gift of Water Fountain Conversations"* Paul

****HYMN, Song Folder #2, vs 4 & 5 *All Are Welcome* All

Let us build a house where hands will reach beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach, and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger:
all are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter, prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:
all are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

****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 *Be Not Afraid* from *Elijah*, Mendelssohn Ellen

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Today's Worship Leaders

preacher
liturgist
musician

Rev. Dr. Paul Ashby
Sandy Holloway
Ellen Bradley