

Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ
St. Francis of Assisi Day
October 4, 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 *Gift of Finest Wheat (You Satisfy The Hungry Heart)*, Charles Callahan Ellen Bradley

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 Sophia Koontz

People have dismissed the teachings of Jesus as idealistic and even impossible.

How can you say blessed are the poor who own no stocks or 401K's?

Why would anyone say blessed are those who hunger, who weep, who are ostracized and insulted?

Jesus calls us not to be popular but to be faithful even when our faith causes us to suffer.

In looking at corruption, greed, bribes, million-dollar dinner politics and massive wealth inequality Jesus did not offer the rich more tax cuts.

Jesus dared to say woe to you who are rich, woe to you who can buy whatever you want.

The ethic of Jesus calls us to turn the world upside-down... feed the hungry, help the poor, heal the sick who have lost insurance coverage.

Let us follow in the steps of St. Francis who dared to walk the path of Jesus.

****HYMN Song Folder #79 *Sing a New Church* All

Summoned by the God who made us rich in our diversity,
Gathered in the name of Jesus richer still in unity:

refrain

Let us bring the gifts that differ and in splendid, varied ways,
Sing a new church into being, one in faith and love and praise.

Trust the goodness of creation; trust the Spirit strong within.

Dare to dream the vision promised, sprung from seed of what has been. *refrain*

Bring the hopes of ev'ry nation; bring the art of ev'ry race.

Weave a song of peace and justice; let it sound through time and space. *refrain*

Draw together at one table all the human family;

Shape a circle ever wider and a people ever free. *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.

SIXTY SECONDS FOR PERSONAL PRAYERS/CONTEMPLATION

INVITATION TO OFFERING

Sophia

OFFERTORY

We Are Many Parts, Haugen

Choir

****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**

Sophia

God of all people, help us to see beyond the blinding propaganda of fear and hate that could tempt us to forget about the poor, the sick, the immigrant in our neighborhood. Let our gifts give voice to the cry for mercy and justice in our land. Help us to see the neighbors who need our support and generosity. Expand our circle of love to make the way of Jesus a reality. Amen

SCRIPTURE

Luke 6:20-33 [NRSVUE]

Sophia

Then Jesus looked up at his disciples and said:

“Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.
“Blessed are you who are hungry now,
for you will be filled.
“Blessed are you who weep now,
for you will laugh.

“Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you[a] on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice on that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven, for that is how their ancestors treated the prophets.

“But woe to you who are rich,
for you have received your consolation.
“Woe to you who are full now,
for you will be hungry.
“Woe to you who are laughing now,
for you will mourn and weep.

“Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets.

“But I say to you who are listening: Love your enemies; do good to those who hate you; bless those who curse you; pray for those who mistreat you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who asks of you, and if anyone takes away what is yours, do not ask for it back again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.

MESSAGE

“Following Jesus Is Not Impossible – A Saint Called Francis”

Paul

****HYMN Song Folder #46 *Make Me a Channel of Your Peace (Prayer of St. Frances)*

All

Make me a channel of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me bring your love.
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord, and where there's doubt, true faith in you.

Make me a channel of your peace. Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope.
Where there is darkness ----- only light, and where there's sadness ever joy.

refrain

O Master, grant that I may never seek ----- so much to be consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand, to be loved, as to love, with all my soul - -.

Make me a channel of your peace. It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
in giving of ourselves that we receive, and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION (Gluten free options are available.)

Paul

All are welcome who practice the way of compassion.

****HYMN Songs of Praise #139

I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me

All

I'm gonna **live** so God can use me anytime, Lord, and anywhere. (repeat)
... **work** ... **pray** ... **sing** ...

****BENEDICTION

Paul

**** 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

Give Thanks Unto God, E.L. Ashford

Ellen

Today's Worship Leaders

preacher
liturgist
musician

Rev. Dr. Paul Ashby
Sophia Koontz
Ellen Bradley

Acknowledgements

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