

**Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ**  
**Water Sunday**  
**May 31, 2026**

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\*\*\*\* *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

*For the Beauty of the Earth*, John Rutter

Martha

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

Sophie Koontz

All across this vastness of creation, space probes seek to detect any signs of water.

**Water is life.**

The very symbol of beginning our life of faith is baptism.

**In the beginning we are baptized in the life-giving waters of the womb. We swim into existence.**

In the sacrament of baptism, we celebrate the new beginning as children of God. We swim into the heart of love.

**Creation itself was designed for us to be baptized in the water of life and life eternal.**

As probes explore the expanse of space looking for any evidence of water...

**We swim in this ocean planet of life and celebrate new life in each baptism.**

\*\*\*\*HYMN NCH 32

*God of The Sparrow, God of the Whale*

All

God of the sparrow, God of the whale, God of the swirling stars,  
How does the creature say Awe? How does the creature say Praise?

God of the earthquake, God of the storm, God of the trumpet blast,  
How does the creature cry Woe? How does the creature cry Save?

God of the rainbow, God of the cross, God of the empty grave,  
How does the creature say Grace? How does the creature say Thanks?

God of the hungry, God of the sick, God of the prodigal,  
How does the creature say Care? How does the creature say Life?

God of the neighbor, God of the foe, God of the pruning hook,  
How does the creature say Love? How does the creature say Peace?

God of the ages, God near at hand, God of the loving heart,  
How do your children say Joy? How do your children say Home.

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

Sophie

OFFERTORY

*Above All Else*, Joel Raney

Choir

\*\*\*\*DOXOLOGY

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

All

\*\*\*\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Sophie

**God of grace, too often we curse the dryness of the desert. We pray for rain to answer the drought. Yet we live beside two life-giving rivers that renew trees, gardens and grass. Teach us the ways of wisdom that we may conserve the gift of this ocean planet for future generations of plants, animals and people. In our giving remind us of all we have received. Amen**

\*\*\*\*HYMN NCH #326

*Crashing Waters at Creation*

All

Crashing waters at creation ordered by the Spirit's breath,  
first to witness day's beginning from the brightness of night's death.

Parting water stood and trembled as the captives passed on through,  
washing off the chains of bondage – channel to a life made new.

Cleansing water once at Jordan closed around the One foretold,  
opened to reveal the glory ever new and ever old.

Living water, never ending, quench the thirst and flood the soul.  
Well-spring, Source of life eternal, drench our dryness, make us whole.

SCRIPTURE

*Acts 2:38-39, Acts 10:44-48, Acts 19:1-5 (NRSVUE)*

Sophie

Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him."  
\*\*\*\*\*

While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, "Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.  
\*\*\*\*\*

While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the interior regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples. He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?" They replied, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." Then he said, "Into what, then, were you baptized?" They answered, "Into John's baptism." Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

MESSAGE

*"The Water of Life"*

Paul

\*\*\*\*HYMN NCH 313

*Like a Tree Beside the Waters*

All

Like a tree beside the waters, nurtured by your loving care,  
We, O God, your sons and daughters, your enduring witness bear.  
In each passing generation may your voice of love be heard.  
Bless, we pray, this congregation with your holy, living Word.

Like a tree beside the river, drawing life from holy streams,  
Fill us with your love forever; recreate our hopes and dreams.  
Through the storms of life sustain us by the wisdom of your grace.  
May the changing of the seasons find us in your warm embrace.

We, beside the living waters, drink from your eternal life.  
Give to all, your sons and daughters, faith that rises over strife.  
O — Living God, most glorious, strengthen us for life today.  
By the hope of timeless promise guide your church upon the Way.

\*\*\*\*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

*Wade in the Water*, Chuck Marohnic

Martha

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### **Today's Worship Leaders**

preacher  
liturgist  
musicians

Rev. Dr. Paul Ashby  
Sophie Koontz  
Martha Jones

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### **Acknowledgements**

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