

**Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ**  
**Third Sunday of Easter**  
**May 1, 2022**

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*\*\* 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

*Andante Largo, John Stanley*

Max Reilly

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Paul Ashby

INVITATION TO WORSHIP

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

Karen Ford

Our God is too small if it demands we hate those who have different faiths.

**Our God is too small if it only approves of our morality while dismissing the goodness of those walking other paths.**

Our God is too small if it only allows us to work with those who agree with us.

**Our God is too small if it tells us we can only love people who look like us.**

Religion is the history of many small, false gods created by tiny tribes of fearful humans.

**Help us, Holy One, to outgrow all of the tribal gods that would shrink our hearts and minds into tiny boxes of fear and prejudice.**

\*\*HYMN NCH 17

*To You, O God, All Creatures Sing*

All

To you, O God, all creatures sing, and all creation, everything

Sings your praises, alleluia!

Your burning sun with golden beam, your silver moon with softer gleam

Sing your praises, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Your wind that blows the tempest by, your clouds that sail across the sky

Sing your praises, alleluia!

Your morning rises with a song, and lights of evening sing along,

Sing your praises, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Your flowing waters, crystal clear, make melodies for you to hear,

Sing your praises, alleluia!

Your fire, bountiful and bright, re-mem-ber-ing your warmth and light,

Sings your praises, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

To you, O God, day after day, your planet earth in every way,

Sings your praises, alleluia!

As savory fruit and fragrant flower show forth your glory and your power,

Singing praises, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Paul

Respond to each shared prayer request with "Peace, Shalom, Salaam."

PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

**Our God, 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.**

INVITATION TO OFFERING		Karen
OFFERTORY	<i>Improvisation, Max Reilly</i>	Max
**DOXOLOGY	<b>Hal-le, hal-le hal-le-lu-ja.</b>	All
**PRAYER OF DEDICATION		Karen

**Holy One, let us experience the joy of outgrowing our religion. Guide us to grow in compassion, wonder, mercy and appreciation for this vast gift of Creation and our own life. Save us from the temptation to hate and hurt those who are different from ourselves. Give us eyes to see the goodness and grace in every culture and nation on this earth. AMEN.**

SCRIPTURE	Acts 9:1-21	Karen
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Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" He asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." He answered, "Here I am, Lord." The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name." But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength. For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God." All who heard him were amazed and said, "Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem among those who invoked this name? And has he not come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?"

MESSAGE	<i>The Joy of Outgrowing Your Religion</i>	Paul
**HYMN Song Folder #45	<i>Table of Plenty</i>	All

*Refrain*

Come to the feast of heaven and earth! Come to the table of plenty!  
God will provide for all that we need, here at the table of plenty.

O come and sit at my table where saints and sinners are friends.  
I wait to welcome the lost and lonely to share the cup of my love. *refrain*

O come and eat without money; come to drink without price.  
My feast of gladness will feed your spirit with faith and fullness of life. *refrain*

My bread will ever sustain you through days of sorrow and woe.  
My wine will flow like a sea of gladness to flood the depths of your soul. *refrain*

Your fields will flower in fullness; your homes will flourish in peace.  
For I, the give of home and harvest, will send my rain on the soil. *refrain*

## COMMUNION

*Adagio, John Stanley*

Max Reilly

\*\*HYMN NCH #76, vs 1

*Sent Forth by God's Blessing*

All

Sent forth by God's blessing our true faith confessing,  
the people of God from this dwelling take leave.  
The service is ended, O now be extended  
the fruits of our worship in all who believe.  
The seed of the teaching, receptive hearts reaching,  
shall blossom in action for God and for all.  
God's grace did invite us, and love shall unite us  
to work for God's realm and to answer the call.

\*\* BENEDICTION

Paul

UNISON SUNG BENEDICTION

*Sent Forth by God's Blessing, NCH 76 vs. 2*

All

With praise and thanksgiving to God ever living,  
the tasks of our everyday life we will face.  
Our faith ever sharing, in love ever caring,  
embracing God's children of each tribe and race.  
With your grace you feed us, with your light now lead us,  
unite us as one in this life that we share.  
Then may all the living with praise and thanksgiving  
give honor to Christ and that name which we bear.

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**Today's Worship Leaders**

preacher		Paul Ashby
liturgist		Karen Ford
musician		Max Reilly

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**FCUCC Staff**

senior pastor	revpaulashby@yahoo.com	Rev. Paul Ashby
choir & bell director	topcatkc@aol.com	Karen Caton
music coordinator, organist/pianist	finance@uccgj.org	Martha Jones
custodian		Anna Driggs
office administrator	office@uccgj.org	Beth Rakestraw
volunteer treasurer/finance	finance@uccgj.org	Martha Jones

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**Pastoral Care**

To call Pastor Paul:

- **His new cell phone, 970-793-8638. [Paul prefers calls over texts]**
- *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.]*

To share a prayer request with the congregation, contact Beth Rakestraw, office@uccgj.org or 970-242-0298 x 105.

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**This Week at FCUCC**  
**May 1 – May 8, 2022**

<b>Sunday 1</b>	9:00	Choir Practice	sanctuary
	10:00	Worship with Communion	sanctuary/YouTube
	11:15	Happy Hour	pilgrim
<b>Monday 2</b>	5:00	Make Mondays Fun	pilgrim
<b>Tuesday 3</b>	5:30	Cantabile Ringers	music room
<b>Wednesday 4</b>	4:30	Mission & Outreach	chapel
<b>Thursday 5</b>	1:00	Fellowship & Hospitality	youth room
<b>Friday 6</b>	10:00	Zoom Coffee Hour	zoom
<b>Sunday 8</b>		<b>Mother's Day   Super Singing Sunday</b>	
	9:00	Choir Practice	sanctuary
	10:00	Worship	sanctuary/YouTube
	11:15	Happy Hour	pilgrim

**Save the Dates:**

May 22 | Annual Meeting

May 30 | Church Office closed for Memorial Day

June 5 | Pentecost

June 9 - 11 | RMC Annual Celebration Business Meeting

June 19 | Father's Day | Juneteenth

**"Corona Time" Church office hours:** Monday through Thursday, 9:00 to 3:00.

*Contact: Beth Rakestraw, Office Administrator, office@uccgj.org*

**Guest WiFi Access** | The name of our guest WiFi is FCUCCguest; the password is “welcomeall.”

**Join us for Coffee Hour after worship** | You must be up to date with vaccinations to attend all church social events including Coffee Hour.

**New on the Sign Up Hub Table** | Sign up to be a greeter/usher! This is a great way to get to know many of the people who attend our church. Have questions? Contact Shirley Kodis.

**Bring a Friend | Graff Dairy | Tuesday, May 10 | 5:30 pm** | Join us at this very popular church event to enjoy wonderful ice cream or maybe a hotdog! Graff Dairy is located at 581 29 Road in Grand Junction. We'll be there until around 7:00 or so. Lots of outdoor seating available.

**Annual Congregational Meeting** | Our Program Year Annual Meeting will take place on Sunday, May 22, 2022 at the end of worship. This is the time when members of the congregation vote on the new proposed council for 2022-2023 and some proposed bylaws changes. It is important that we have as much participation as possible. Please save the date on your calendar and join in the governance of our congregation. A meeting agenda and other materials will be sent via email May 9.

**Mission & Outreach May Collection** | May is the 2<sup>nd</sup> month of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the year, and Mission and Outreach continues to focus on **Solidarity, Not Charity**. For May, we will be collecting “pouch foods.” What are those? Think of things that come in pouches, like apple sauce, tuna, chicken, dried foods.

**Mission & Outreach Ongoing Collections for Solidarity, Not Charity** | We currently collect hotel and personal size toiletries, water/milk jugs with their lids and plastic grocery bags for Solidarity, Not Charity.

**May Collection for Catholic Outreach | Canned Cream of Whatever Soups** | Cream of soup in every flavor, More to cook with, more to savor. So bring those soups, please, all the cream(y) ones, For the Catholic Outreach cooks, those are the dreamy ones!

## **Vision & Mission**

*As a progressive Christian community of faith, we seek to walk with compassion, inclusion, acceptance, bravery and understanding as Jesus did.*

*We STRIVE to:*

- ◇ *be a welcoming congregation where you are safe to be who you are.*
- ◇ *be life-long learners that question and challenge each other to grow in faith, thought and actions.*
- ◇ *work for peace, equity and justice for all people*
- ◇ *protect and restore the integrity of our earth and all of creation.*
- ◇ *be change-makers.*