

Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ
Fifth Sunday After Pentecost
June 23, 2024

*** Some rise to their feet, some rise in their hearts—please rise as you are able.*

PRELUDE

Lobe den Herren, setting by John Carter

Martha Jones

GATHERING BELL

At the sound of the bell, please silence yourselves and prepare for worship.

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

Carolyn Holmgren

Eternal Spirit of Life, help us to live in harmony with the earth and all living beings.

**Let us work together with people of faith and no faith, who seek to preserve and protect
this tiny island planet.**

Open our hearts and minds to a dawn of cooperation with all people working to heal the injuries
done to our generous earth.

Awaken us to what we have in common with all humans on earth.

Liberate us from the blindness of racism, tribalism and narrow nationalism.

Free us to work with all people seeking the way of compassion and healing.

**HYMN

Sing Praise to All (tune: *Lobe den Herren*)

All

Sing praise to all that has offered us life and sustains us-
All that has opened our hearts to the love borne within us:
Family and friends,
Beauty we see without end-
Gifts that our lives lay before us.

Sing praise to all that has opened our minds to new vistas-
All that has called us to seek out new truths through the ages:
Vision and word,
Music that sought to be heard
These are the gifts that will mold us.

Sing praise to minds that will fashion our bold new tomorrows-
Yesterday's wisdom released from its dogma and credos.
Evermore free
To live out what we believe
Walking the path that Life hallows.

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.

INVITATION TO OFFERING

Carolyn

OFFERTORY

Fantasy on 'Holy Manna,' arr John Carter

Martha

**OFFERING RESPONSE (tune: *Holy Manna*)

All

Lend your joy to all our giving, let it light our pilgrim way;
from the night of anxious keeping, loose us into generous day.
Open wide our hands in sharing as we heed Christ's ageless call,
healing, teaching, and reclaiming, honoring you by loving all.

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Carolyn

Source of Life, You inspire us to seek the path of mercy, compassion and justice. You enable us to see all children as children of God. You reveal that we are all part of one human family. Let our donations inspire the courage to create a more caring and just world. Amen

HYMN

Keep Wide Your Heart (tune: *Trentham – Breathe on Me, Breath of God*)

All

Keep wide your heart to love, all it might ever be.
Count not the cost love may impose;
to pay it, our deepest need.

Keep wide your mind to truth, all it might ever mean.
All self-delusions, let them go
and truth, it will set you free.

Keep wide your life to dreams easing the fear-filled night,
until each possibility
glows with a persistent light.

Keep wide the road to hope. Clear off its weed-fill'd way,
that all might walk it, side by side,
into a more perfect day.

SCRIPTURE

Luke 19:1-9

Carolyn

He entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham.

MESSAGE

"Can a Person Live an Ethical Life Without Belief in God?"

Paul

HYMN

Miracle of Life (tune: *Ode to Joy*)

All

Miracle of life unfolding,
dazzling to our watching eyes,

far beyond full comprehension,
secrets of the earth and sky.
Each advance of understanding
each new piece of knowledge gained
leaves the soul amazed and humbled,
child-like wonder yet remains.

Nature teems with life abundant,
stunning in variety,
shape and size and color differing,
wondrous in complexity.
From a high, majestic mountain
to the contours of a shell,
Life has much to teach of difference,
Rich we be to learn it well.

Filled with joy we stand in wonder
at the life in which we share,
Gratefully we find our spirits
sensing glory everywhere.
Sun and moon and tiny creature
in their beauty stir the heart,
leading us to sacred duty,
call us well to do our part.

**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

Hymn to Joy, arr. Joel Raney

Martha

Today's Worship Leaders

preacher
liturgist
musician

Rev. Dr. Paul Ashby
Carolyn Holmgren
Martha Jones

Acknowledgements

The hymns today were written by Gretta Vosper (*Sing Praise to All* and *Keep Wide Your Heart*), and her spouse, Scott Kearns (*Miracle of Life*). They are new-ish hymns paired with older, familiar hymn tunes. Copyrights for the texts are held respectively by Gretta Vosper and Scott Kearns who generously give permission for churches to use their hymns in worship services. All rights reserved.

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